STEP-BY-STEP: DESIGNING A COVER THE DC COMICS WAY!

DC NATION

• ISSUE #2

WEDDING CRASHER!

INSIDE THE EXCLUSIVE DIARY OF MAKING BATMAN #50's WEDDING EVENT!

FLASH WAR!

RANKING THE FASTEST SPEEDSTERS ALIVE!

HEROES IN CRISIS

WHO DIES FIRST!?

PLUS!

BENDIS' SUPERMAN

SNYDER'S JUSTICE LEAGUE

& MORE!

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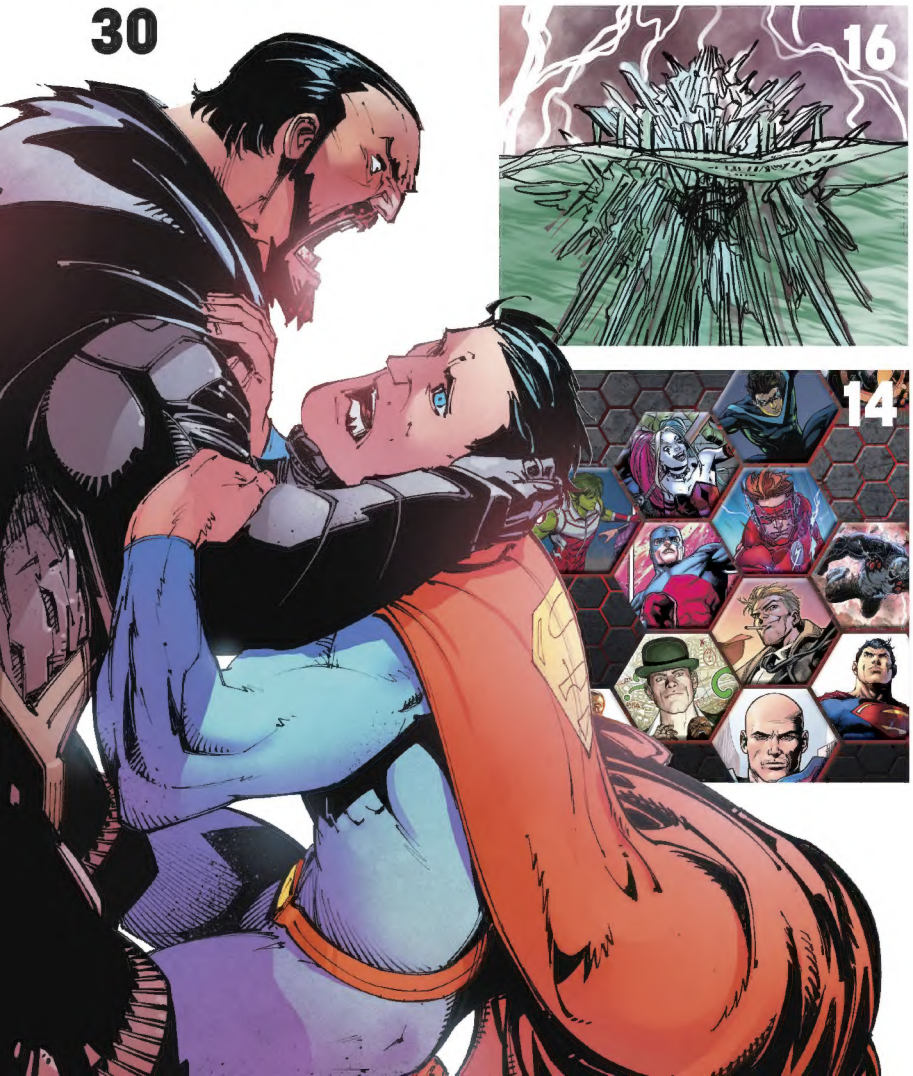

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Letter from DC Publisher Dan DiDio

DC Publisher
DAN DIDIO

Taking chances.

Taking risks.

That's the difference between making a good comic book and a great comic book.

Tom King and Mikel Janín's work on BATMAN #50 proves that.

They pitched a story that wasn't just big and exciting; in execution it delivered on every level, from action to the emotion of the wedding day between Batman and Catwoman.

When writing stories like this, one of our biggest hurdles is how well our readers know the DC Universe.

We have an amazing fan base who know our universe so well in so many different media, and also have read the books for such a long period of time, that they're intimately familiar with the characters and the probable directions of the stories themselves. Oftentimes they see the twists coming.

The hardest thing we need to do, the hardest way for us to keep everybody engaged and excited about what's going on, is finding ways to be consistent with our characters and who they are while finding new directions and new types of stories to tell with them.

Tom and Mikel's story is a great example of confounding expectations–of an ending that's both surprising and inevitable. It plays with so much history between Batman and Catwoman, and to bring that story to such a conclusion like this not only wraps up a great storyline that's been playing out for over a year, but also gives you wonderful jumping-on points for so many new stories coming out of it.

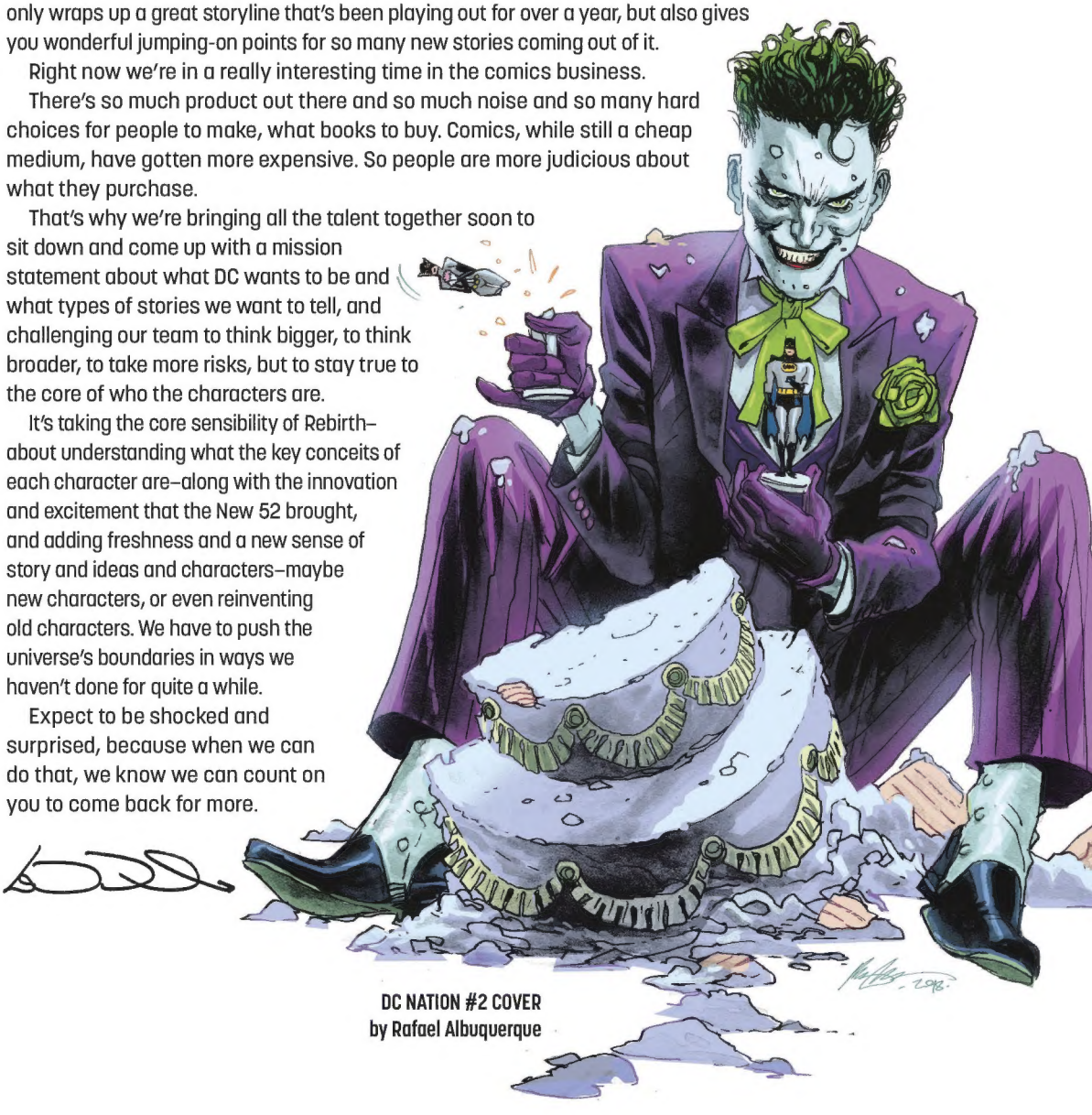
Right now we're in a really interesting time in the comics business.

There's so much product out there and so much noise and so many hard choices for people to make, what books to buy. Comics, while still a cheap medium, have gotten more expensive. So people are more judicious about what they purchase.

That's why we're bringing all the talent together soon to sit down and come up with a mission statement about what DC wants to be and what types of stories we want to tell, and challenging our team to think bigger, to think broader, to take more risks, but to stay true to the core of who the characters are.

It's taking the core sensibility of Rebirth–about understanding what the key conceits of each character are–along with the innovation and excitement that the New 52 brought, and adding freshness and a new sense of story and ideas and characters–maybe new characters, or even reinventing old characters. We have to push the universe's boundaries in ways we haven't done for quite a while.

Expect to be shocked and surprised, because when we can do that, we know we can count on you to come back for more.



DC NATION #2 COVER
by Rafael Albuquerque

DC INSIDER

How I broke into comics with...

MARK RUSSELL

The insightful and innovative writer of the Eisner-nominated FLINTSTONES reboot and the hit Snagglepuss series shares how he broke into writing comics.

"I'd written a couple of books–one book in particular, in which I sort of modernized and condensed the Bible, is called God Is Disappointed in You. Apparently, [DC editor] Marie Javins had it on her desk; she got it through an acquaintance. And when [DC] was looking to reboot PREZ, the story of a teenager who becomes president, Marie, having read my book, suggested me.

"I got a call from Marie and DC Comics out of the blue asking if I'd be interested. I wasn't expecting an offer like that, but it's really hard to say no when you get one! I was more of a literary writer than a comic book writer, but I've really enjoyed making the leap into comics.

"I've just written things for as long as I can remember. This is just something I do! I don't really think about it that much. I had always approached it like, this will be a hobby, this will be something I do when I'm not working. But comics has allowed me the opportunity to actually make a living out of it and make it my day job, which has been fantastic." ■

YOU ASKED/WE ANSWERED...

In DC NATION #1, Assistant Editor Andrew Marino penned an article exploring which Flash was faster: Barry Allen or Wally West. Let's watch as a fan gives 10 reasons why Andrew is wrong.

HI MR. MARINO,

I'm 17 years old and a devoted, die-hard fanboy of DC Comics and most notably the Flash (Barry Allen). I just read the recent issue of DC NATION and I have some disagreements with what you wrote (with all due respect of course). Barry Allen is the fastest Flash. Everyone seems to forget:

1) Barry single-handedly took down the Anti-Monitor in CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS.

2) Barry broke the time barrier without the assistance of the Cosmic Treadmill (FLASHPOINT).

3) In the 2010 FLASH series, Barry was so fast he went into a library and speed-read every book and then used that info to rebuild an entire apartment in an instant.

4) Barry went a couple seconds into the future during the BLACKEST NIGHT series in order to short-circuit the Black Lantern power ring that was chasing him.

5) In the current FLASH series, Barry has moved so fast that the Shade's shadows, which move at the speed of darkness (speed of light), appeared frozen in time.

6) Barry has an ability called Speed Force absorption which allows him to absorb Speed Force energy from other speedsters.

7) By tapping into the Speed Force with his brain, Barry has the ability to tactically assess and predict the numerous possible and probable outcomes of most any given situation.

8) Barry is said to be one of the only beings in the DC Universe to have total molecular control over his whole body.

9) Barry is capable of negating the effects of Darkseid's Anti-Life Equation, through the physical contact of his Speed Force energy.

10) Where is Shazam?

Thanks,
MUSAB QURESHI

...Shazam? Anyway, thanks for taking the time to write, Musab. I'm a huge Flash fan myself and have a few thoughts on your argument. While you're right, Barry did take down the Anti-Monitor in CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS, Barry lost his life in that fight. When Wally hit that same Crisis top speed during ZERO HOUR and the "Terminal Velocity" arc, Wally was able to hold on and survive the feat. Barry did run through time without the assistance of a Cosmic Treadmill in FLASHPOINT, but Wally was doing that starting in FLASH #113! Barry can absorb other people's speed through Speed Force absorption, but Wally was displaying his kinetic absorption ability all the way back in the '80s and '90s! I love Barry's superhuman processing power, but it had a hang-up: he'd get caught up in his own thoughts, and he wouldn't be able to move–not necessarily a good thing for the fastest man alive!

Circling back on Shazam: he'll be making his presence felt in the DC Universe this fall with Geoff Johns writing.

Best,
ANDREW MARINO

DCCOMICS.COM

ON SALE AUGUST 8!

MONTHLY

WHAT I DO...

KENNY LOPEZ

Director of covers for print

MY JOB...
I oversee the design and production of every periodical cover that we do.

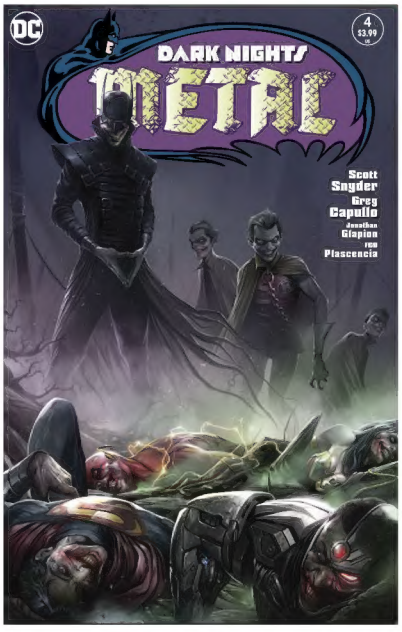
THE BEGINNING...
I started as a freelancer in the early '90s, working for DC, doing logo designs and hand-lettering. And eventually that led to 2003, when they decided to bring the lettering department in internally. A few years later I got moved over to cover editor, and I've been working on covers ever since.

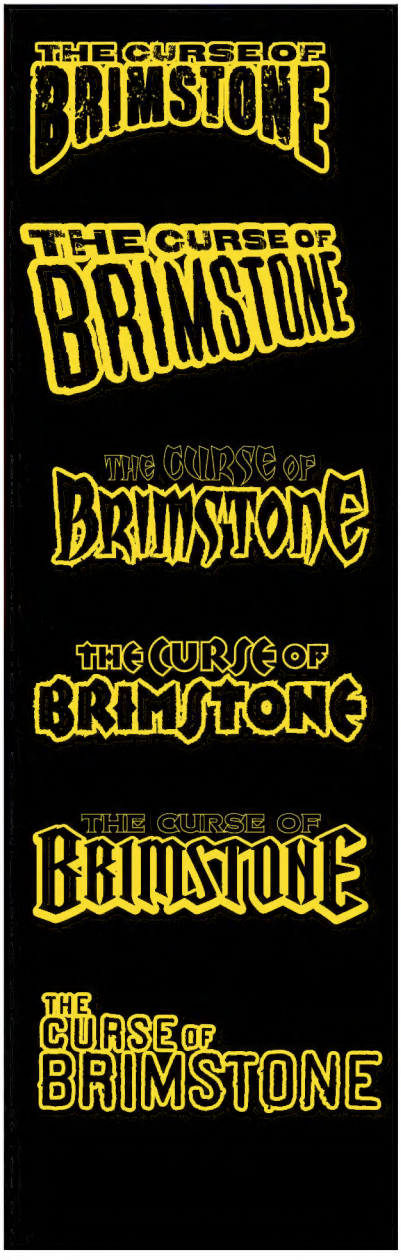
LOGO PRIDE...
Recently, I did the ACTION COMICS #1000 logo and the 80 Years of Superman logos. I'm pretty proud of those.

DAILY CHALLENGES...
Maintaining the schedule! [I'm assigned] a lot of books per month–30-something covers per week–and I have a team of two. We have [to do] all of these covers, and anything else they throw at us. There are times when we got a big event with retailer variants, and that's double, or triple, or quadruple [the covers] for the week, depending on what the event is and how many retailer variants have been sold. The most we had was DKIII: THE MASTER RACE #1–it had a hundred retailer variants.

APPROACHING A DESIGN...
Sometimes you'll sit with a pad and start doing little thumbnails. Then you start looking over fonts to help bring about your vision. Sometimes it's as simple as having a font and having a nice graphic element with it. Other times the font is just the basis, and you'll extrapolate well beyond what the font originally was.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MONTHLY COMIC FROM DC?
I'm really looking forward to reading [Brian Michel] Bendis' SUPERMAN with Ivan Reis. And the new JUSTICE LEAGUE. I'm working on the covers for JUSTICE LEAGUE right now, and I'm looking forward to seeing Scott Snyder's take on the team.




THE CURSE OF BRIMSTONE
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Top: Lopez helps hold up one of the numerous overloaded bookshelves around DCHQ. Left: Variant covers for BATMAN #50 and DARK NIGHTS METAL #4. Right: Different takes on the CURSE OF BRIMSTONE logos.

Aquaman always said he'd die for Atlantis.
The Suicide Squad aims to make him keep his word!
SUICIDE SQUAD
AQUAMAN
DAN ABNETT AND
ROB WILLIAMS WITH
JOSE LUIS AND
JOE BENNETT!
TASK FORCE X PLANS TO
"SINK ATLANTIS!" IN
SUICIDE SQUAD #45 (AUG. 8)
AQUAMAN #39 (AUG. 15)
SUICIDE SQUAD #46 (SEPT. 12)
& AQUAMAN #40 (SEPT. 19)!
MONTHLY
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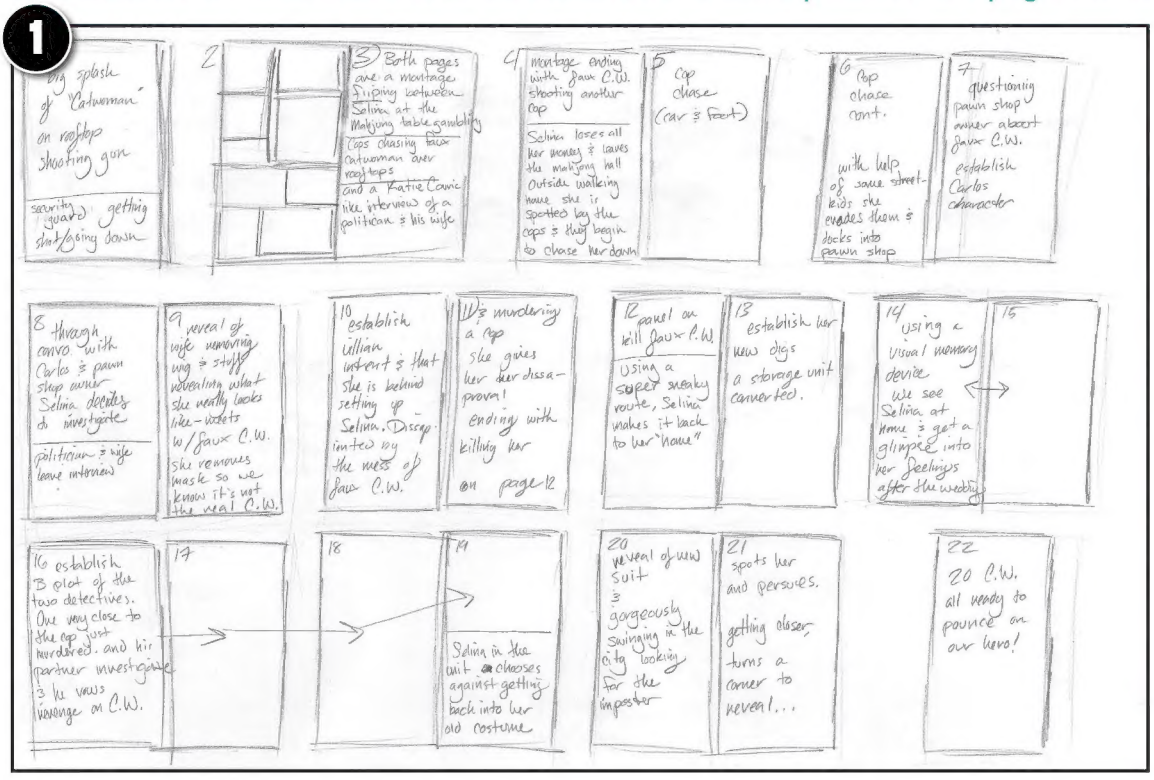
BREAKING DOWN A PAGE

Joëlle Jones and Laura Allred take us inside their creative process for a page from CATWOMAN #1!

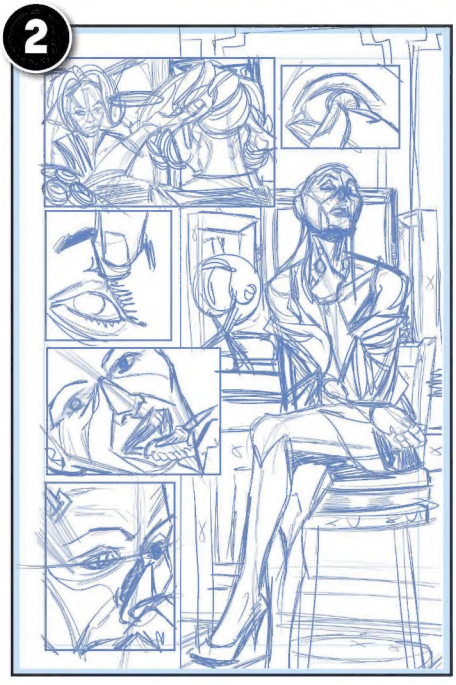
1


Big splash of Catwoman on rooftop shooting gun
Both pages are a montage flipping between Selina at the Mahjong table gambling Cops chasing Faux Catwoman over rooftops and a Katie Couric like interview of a politican & his wife
Montage ending with Faux C.W. shooting another cop
Selina loses all her money & leaves the mahjong hall Outside walking home she is spotted by the cops & they begin to chase her down
Cop chase (car & feet)
Cop chase cont.
with help of some street-kids she evades them & looks into pawn shop
questioning pawn shop owner about Faux C.W. establish Carlos character
through convo with Carlos & pawn shop owner Selina decides to investigate
politician & wife leave interview
reveal of wife removing wig & stuff revealing what she really looks like - wants w/ Faux C.W. She removes mask so we know it's not the real C.W.
establish villian instrument & that she is behind setting up Selina. Disappointed by the news of Faux C.W.
C.W.'s murdering a cop She gives her her dissaproval ending with killing her on page 12
panel on kill Faux C.W.
Using a super sneaky route, Selina makes it back to her "home"
establish her new digs a storage unit converted.
using a visual memory device We see Selina at home & get a glimpse into her feelings after the wedding
establish B plot of the two detectives. One very close to the cop just murdered. and his partner investigating & he vows revenge on C.W.
Selina in the suit & chooses against getting back into her old costume
reveal of new suit & gorgeously swinging in the city looking for the imposter
spots her and persues. getting closer, turns a corner to reveal...
20 C.W. all ready to pounce on our hero!

1 JOËLLE JONES on her script process:

"Since I write for myself to draw, I tend to plot in broader strokes, focusing on the specific scenes, how many beats each one needs, and the emotional space the story requires. I use the book map so I can look at each page turn and know where my reveals are. In this case, I knew I wanted to showcase the truth of our new villain, and that she should have the whole page to herself."

2



2 JOËLLE JONES on pencils:

"Much of the finer details are ironed out when I do layouts and then pencils. That's where a lot of the real writing is for me. In the case of Mrs. Wolff, I knew from the get-go I wanted a villain that went against the grain of what we expect. Most of the female villains at DC are really sexy, so I wanted my bad guy to be someone who was really grotesque, who had ruined herself with surgery and drugs."

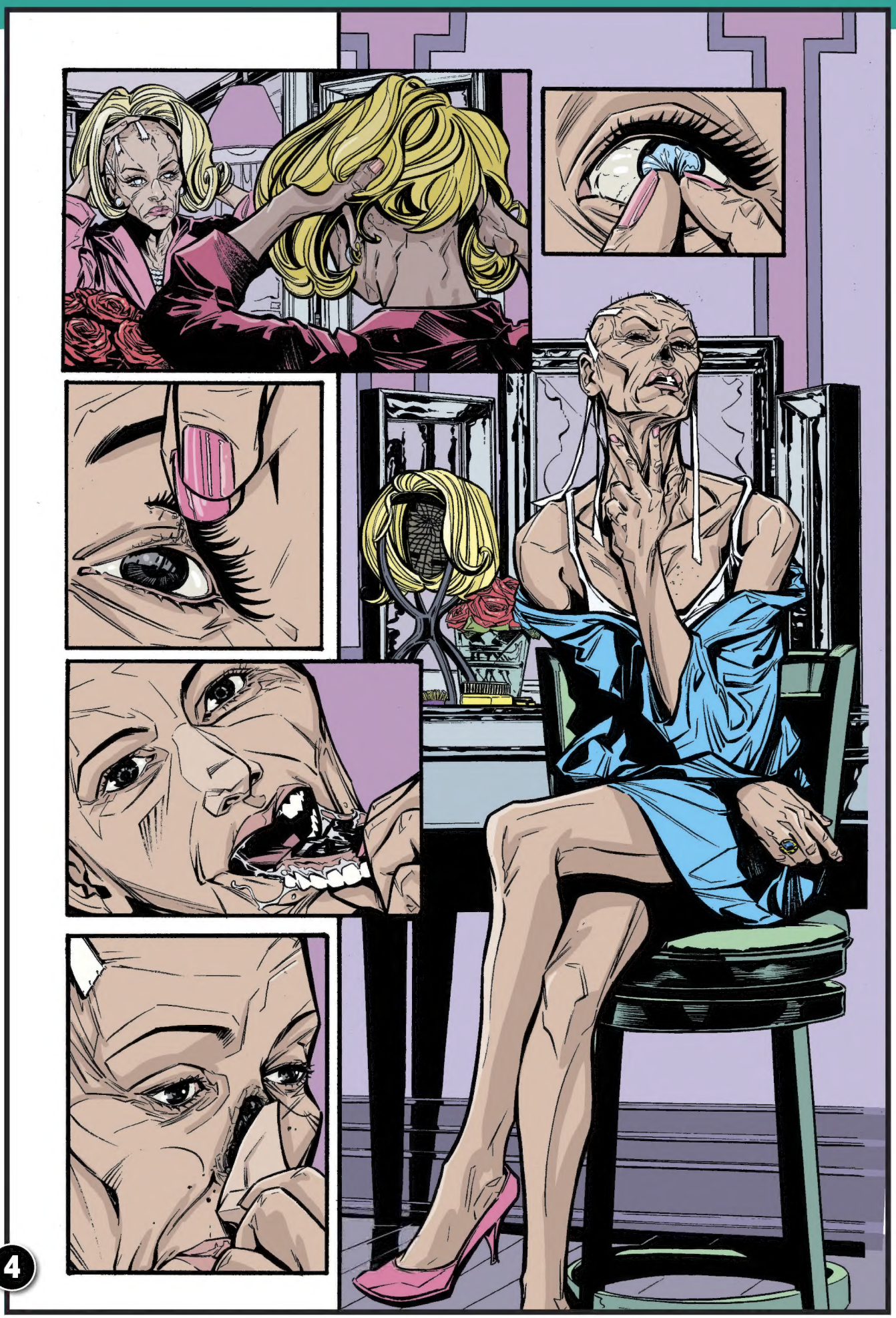
3

3 JOËLLE JONES on inks:

"All the pacing here was really dictated by the details. I wanted to show her take herself apart piece by piece. Inking is where I dig into the nitty-gritty and go in heavy on the detail. Here I used heavy blacks on the clothes and scenery, but left the face and figure more open so that Laura Allred could really make it look gross."

4 LAURA ALLRED on colors:

"It was easy to get inspired with page 10. A horrific reveal. Tragic even. The top priority with the colors was to have a beautiful fleshiness as we see her beauty regiment in reverse."



DC DIARY: BATMAN #50

By Allyson Gronowitz

Batman Group Editor Jamie S. Rich details the 16-day fight to get the over-sized BATMAN #50 out to print and in your hands

JAMIE S. RICH

Above: Legendary Batman artist Greg Capullo's pin-up pages.
Opposite: Mikel Janin's uncolored sequential pages.

SPOILERS AHEAD! READ **BATMAN #50** BEFORE PROCEEDING!

We've got a secret: most comic books barely make it out on time.

While every editor tries to hit the "due to printer" date–a week before the book is "drop dead" and in danger of missing its ship date–most comics–especially the most high-profile and exciting–bend the schedule close to its breaking point to fix those errant balloon tails pointing at the wrong character, color correcting a highlight in a hero's costume or a hundred other tweaks that go into making the best book possible.

The Dark Knight's wedding issue in BATMAN #50 is no different.

BATMAN #49 by writer Tom King and artist Mikel Janin–the lead-in to the nuptials between Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle–went right to the drop dead, leaving King, Janin and Batman Group Editor Jamie Rich a shorter than usual production window for the oversized issue #50.

Luckily, the all-star team was up to the task.

With King's script ready to go, Janin back at the drawing board and Rich running the show from his Burbank office at DCHQ, the twice-monthly shipping book began with just over two-and-a-half weeks for Janin to produce his pages.

Here's a peek behind the cowl with an exclusive diary of the production of BATMAN #50 from Rich's perspective.

16 DAYS BEFORE DROP DEAD (Tuesday, May 29)

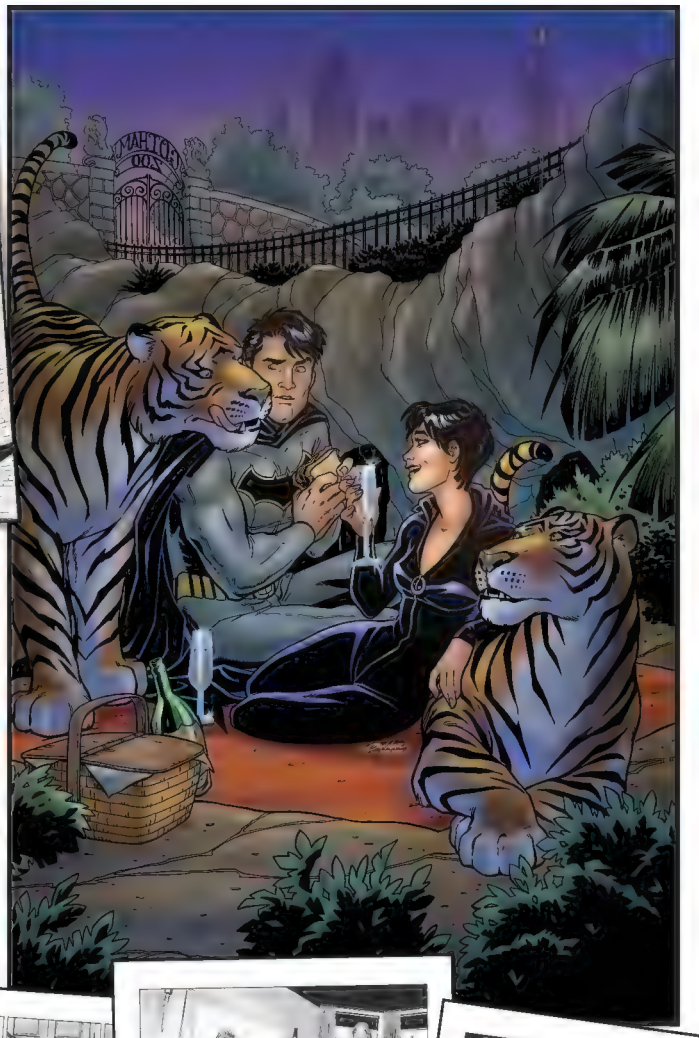
"A week after finishing #49, we have our first seven pages of inks from Mikel [Janín] for the main part of the story, which is pages 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13. There are two-page gaps every few story pages reserved for pin-ups by popular Batman artists of the past doing their most memorable Batman and Catwoman moments. But these are no ordinary pin-ups and are integrated into the actual story.

"It looks rough but we're actually in a very strong place in getting this book to where it needs to go. There were some definite challenges in doing the one-pagers because everyone was asked to do their Batman/Catwoman, so we're trying not to be too repetitive.

"We need a new title for the story, since our working title is 'Holy Matrimony, Batman!'"

15 DAYS BEFORE DROP DEAD (Wednesday, May 30)

"Today so far we've gotten colors on [artist] Amanda Conner's piece from Paul Mounts and David Finch, who thought he was unable to do a page, is now back in, so I sent him material to work on."



14 DAYS BEFORE DROP DEAD (Thursday, May 31)

"Nothing new has come in since yesterday. Everyone's working, but it's always a frustrating day when you, as an editor, can do nothing but wait."

13 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Friday, June 1)

"Just got a final page from [Mister Miracle artist] Mitch Gerads. Mikel is reliable and focused but I haven't gotten anything from him in a couple of days, so I emailed this morning to find out what's up and remind him that Monday is the deadline. But our main goal today was getting BATMAN #49 out the door now that it's colored, lettered and proofed."

10 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Monday, June 4)

"We're starting to get most of the pages from Mikel Janín– we got 16-17, 20-21 and 24-25. We got six more pages, so we're four away from being done, and three pin-ups away from being done with those. So I emailed [DC Publisher, Chief Creator Officer and superstar artist] Jim Lee, our boss, this morning to see how he was doing on his contribution to the book.

"We wanted [artist] Tony S. Daniel to do a wedding announcement piece for the New York Times but due to his demanding scheduling on an upcoming BATMAM arc, he couldn't participate–the Times is picking panels from the issue, but they also wanted a central image that is kind of a candid shot of the bride and groom. So we're going to have Mikel do that immediately after he finishes his inks for #50.

"I also sent Tom King a proposed order for how we're going to put the pin-ups together, so if he agrees on those then we can send those off to the letterer. We still might rearrange them as we see them lettered, but I tried to pick them out thematically to figure out which pieces should go together."

9 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Tuesday, June 5)

"Looks like we just got an Arthur Adams cover in, which is our main variant, so we're looking for a colorist for that. And despite yesterday, when [editor] Brittany [Holzherr] and I came

up with two different arrangements for the one-pagers; Tom sent in his own arrangement this morning, so we're gonna go with that and get everything out to the letterer so that we can get an actual proof. Still missing inks from Jim Lee, and anything from [CATWOMAN writer/artist] Joëlle Jones, but... we're close!"

All that color art? More killer pin-ups. The black and white art? Yup, more of Mikel's pages.

8 DAYS BEFOR DROP DEAD (Wednesday, Jun[illegible])

"We re-ordered everything based on how we wanted to lay it out. We sent it all to the letterer and we got a sample of how we were going to put the names of the individual artists on their pages. With Tom, though, we decided that rather than doing full credits on those pages we'll just do last names on each page and then have a separate credits page. We're also going to try to move all of the ads to the back or run ads on double-page spreads because every two pages in the story go together.

"The publicity team highlighted certain pages of Bruce and Selina in their tux and gown that they want to use to promote the issue, so we're asking the colorist to do those first. We're also trying to do something a little warmer than we do with colors in most of the other BATMAN issues, to lean into the happiness of the occasion."

7 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Thursday, June 7)

"Final inks are in from Mikel. Still running hot on the Jim Lee and Joëlle Jones pages but hopefully we'll have most of them tomorrow. I have a complete draft of lettering that I'm going over, and we have to choose distinct fonts for Batman and Catwoman.

"[Artist] Lee Weeks said to me yesterday that he wanted to do a variant cover, and I thought for a second that he was being serious and that he regretted not doing one–but then he sent along a Peanuts drawing of Charlie Brown getting the football pulled out from under him, and [Weeks] had drawn the Bat-cowl on Charlie Brown and the Catwoman cowl on Lucy."

6 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Friday, June 8)

"Tom King and I went over the first lettering pass and we had some things we wanted to adjust, style-wise. He sent in corrections for his re-write on the script, so that's moving along. We'll probably do one or two more passes on the lettering. In

doing so, we identified some problems in terms of a couple pages of story.

"One page of story that we think we can clarify: Tweedledum, we took him out of his suit and put him in an Arkham Asylum outfit to separate him from Tweedledee, who is elsewhere with Batman.

"Meanwhile, Jim Lee's piece is inked and being colored by Alex Sinclair.

"Proofs are starting to spread around the company and the response has been even more positive and supportive than expected–marketing is starting to share things with retailers, and we're setting up a big reveal of a lot of the interior pages with media outlets like Entertainment Weekly."

3 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Monday, June 11)

"Joëlle's and Jim Lee's pages are in. We're getting the last three colors today from Jordie Bellaire, on the one-pagers. Currently waiting on another lettering proof and colors for 15 of the main pages, but hopefully we should have all of that within a couple of hours. And we're getting a color correction from José Villarrubia just to change some skin tone–he said he would have that tomorrow."

2 DAYS BEFORE THE DROP DEAD (Tuesday, June 12)

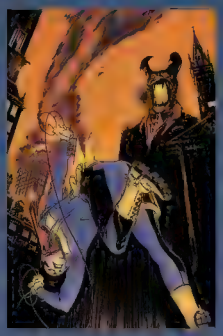
"We got in colors for [artist] Clay Mann's piece, we got in colors for Jim Lee's piece, and we've seen color proofs for all the Mikel Janín pieces. So, the entire book is now drawn and colored. We had a few tweaks to the Mikel's pages–there was an issue of night and day that we fixed up. We also added another character to page 38–that's the page where you discover that there's a conspiracy going on, and we added a few people that we see have been involved. We did a final round of corrections with Tom, which he actually did in his hotel room while waiting to go on "Late Night with Seth Meyers." We're basically at the finish line–we've gone through proofreading, gone through legal, and we got [Justice League Group editor] Marie Javins to review it as VP sign-off."

THE DROP DEAD (Wednesday, June 13)

"The majority of our books close on Thursdays but BATMAN #50 contains a digital redemption code, which means it needs to be on the printer today. Luckily, it's pretty much all in! We're getting the last few corrections done, and we should be ready to go in a couple of hours." ■

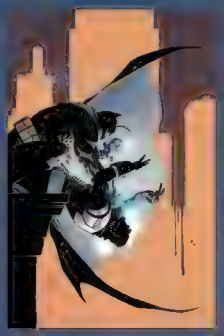
BAT SIGNALS

As the nuptials come to a close, Bruce Wayne finds himself on jury duty, Catwoman runs afoul of the police, Nightwing city gets a high-tech upgrade and Batgirl battles a foe she can't walk away from this summer



BATGIRL

After a tease of her upcoming arc in this month's BATGIRL #25, writer Mairghread Scott and artist Paul Pelletier begin the "Art of the Crime" arc with August's #26. Facing killer art critic, Grotesque, Barbara Gordon finds herself in a fight she can't walk away from, when the villain shorts out the tech that allows the hero to walk. Now forced to return home and stay with her father, commissioner Jim Gordon, Batgirl may die of the commissioner's bedside manner before her enemies track her down.



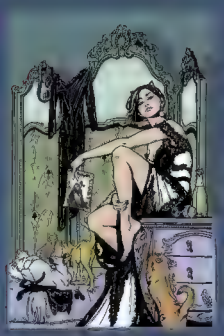
BATMAN

Bruce Wayne must serve Gotham not as the Dark Knight but as a juror in a criminal case. Sitting in the jury box as Mr. Freeze is put on trial in BATMAN #51-#53 by writer Tom King and artist Lee Weeks, Batman must confront some of his own more brutal tactics in his war on crime. Legendary artist Matt Wagner (MAGE) joins King for issue #54 as Dick Grayson–the original Robin–returns to team-up with his former partner. Then with September's issue #55 Tony S. Daniel rejoins the book as the KGBeast returns to reheat the cold War in Gotham.

BATWOMAN

The end of summer marks the end of Batwoman's ongoing series.

Writer Marguerite Bennet and artist Fernando Blanco wrap up their run as the Dark Knight sends Kate on a cold case that forces her to team up with former flame and current GCPD detective, Renee Montoya. That puts them on a collision course with Clock King, who's concocted a new street drug that gives the user pre-cognitive sight. Now Kate's juggling a moral quandary–take the drug for her own crimefighting purposes–as well as a romantic one. Should she and Renee give love a second chance?



CATWOMAN

When a new cat burglar starts using Selina's M.O. and framing her for the deeds in this month's CATWOMAN #1, the feline fatale must travel cross-country to unleash her claws on the brazen imitator. Writer/artist Joelle Jones has Catwoman counting her nine lives as she contends with both the impersonator and the police, as law enforcement come after Selina for a cop-killing. Plus, there's a crime boss calling the shots that's unlike anything Selina's ever faced in Gotham City–and that's saying something when you factor in all the kooks, crooks and killers she's faced.

DETECTIVE COMICS

Writer Bryan Hill and artists Phillippe Briones and Miguel Mendoca conclude their team up between Batman and the Outsiders in DETECTIVE COMICS #987 with Suicide Squad administrator Amanda Waller making a final play against Batman and his allies for the mysterious tech that can drive anyone into a violent, psychotic state. In September's #988, writer James Robinson (STARMAN) and artist Stephen Segovia begin a six-issue arc on the twice-monthly title that sees Two-Face emerge in Gotham and begin releasing villains in pairs to attack Batman.

NIGHTWING

This month's NIGHTWING #47 begins a high-tech upgrade in Bludhaven thanks to shadowy tech mogul Willem Cloke. The upgrades have Dick Grayson (aka Nightwing) feeling like Fred Flintstone in a George Jetson universe, but he's facing a fatal systems crash against an even worse threat–the cyber criminal called Wyrm and his black hat hacker group. The story wraps up in August's NIGHTWING ANNUAL #1 where writer Benjamin Percy reteams with his former GREEN ARROW artist Otto Schmidt and Nightwing teams with investigative journalist Vicki Vale to find out what's really going on with his city's upgrades.

'CRISIS' COUNSELOR

The heroes of the DC Universe find themselves in turmoil when two of their own ends up dead

There's a crisis headed toward DC's greatest heroes, but it isn't coming from another dimension, a time-displaced despot or the Fourth World–this time, the threat is homegrown.

Writer Tom King and his BATMAN collaborator/artist Clay Mann don't want to reveal too much about their new seven-issue HEROES IN CRISIS mini-series coming in September, but King did confirm that heroes will die, heroes will change radically, and the DC Universe will never be the same.

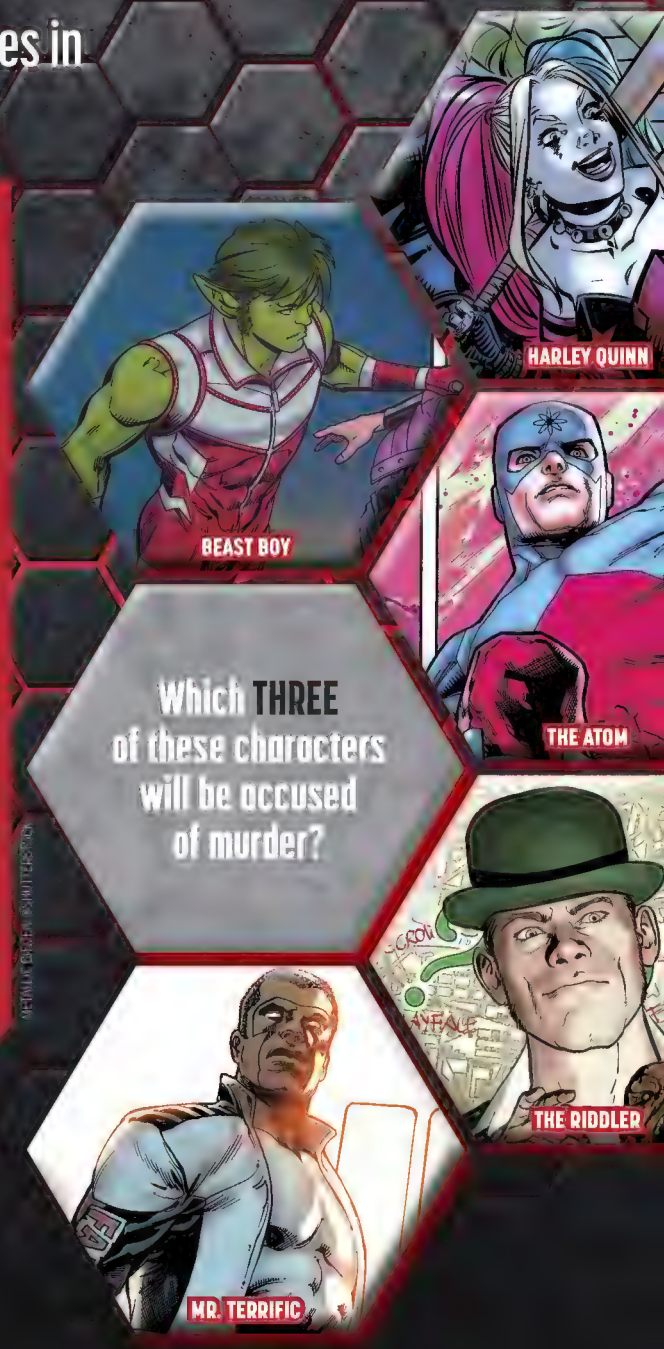
However, this new crisis is more personal than any we've seen before: these threats are firmly based in the heads and hearts of DC's most iconic characters. As King has referenced before, Sanctuary is a new DC concept–a crisis center for heroes who spend their lives fighting villainy and protecting others.

"I feel like I'm part of a rolling generation of people who spent their twenties overseas fighting terrorism," explains King, a former Central Intelligence Agency officer. "Millions of people cycle through that machine and come home to America. And I think that sort of experience of violence is shaping who we are as a culture, and as a country. And I want to talk about that. I want to talk about that experience, the experience of what violence can do to a person, to a community, to a nation, to a world.

"That's what [HEROES IN CRISIS] is going to be about," continues the writer. "It's going to be about the effect of the DC Universe, the effect of these superheroes who have to live violent lives to save the world, and what that does. What sacrifice they're making every time they go out to fight the next bad guy. It's personal, but it's ambitious."

You may have already missed your first clues about the series, if you didn't read March's BATMAN #43 closely. After the recent defeat of Poison Ivy, Batman says: "Ivy's arrived safely at Sanctuary. They'll do what they do."

Keep your eyes peeled for more clues as HEROES IN CRISIS grows closer to release. ■



Think you can figure out the mystery before even the Dark Knight Detective? Start uncovering the clues right here...

WONDER WOMAN
BOB HARRAS
BOOSTER GOLD
CATWOMAN
Which ONE of these characters will be revealed as a murderer?
DEATHSTROKE
NIGHTWING
KYLE RAYNER
Which TWO of these characters will be murdered?
RED ROBIN
FLASH / WALLY WEST
GREEN ARROW
DAMAGE
ARSENAL
JOHN CONSTANTINE
CYBORG
HEROES IN CRISIS hits stands September 26!
SUPERMAN
LEX LUTHOR
POISON IVY

FORTRESS

By Mike Cotton

Superstar artist IVAN REIS cracks open his SUPERMAN #1 sketchbook for an inside look at the newly relocated and redesigned Fortress of Solitude

With all the twists and turns so far in Brian Michael Bendis' work on Superman, the writer's most controversial move may just be where he's placing the Fortress of Solitude. After the Kryptonian getaway in the Arctic was demolished by Rogol Zaar in the MAN OF STEEL miniseries, Bendis and series artist Ivan Reis decided to establish a new Fortress far away from its frigid, snow-covered origins and into an even more remote and mysterious locale–the Bermuda Triangle.

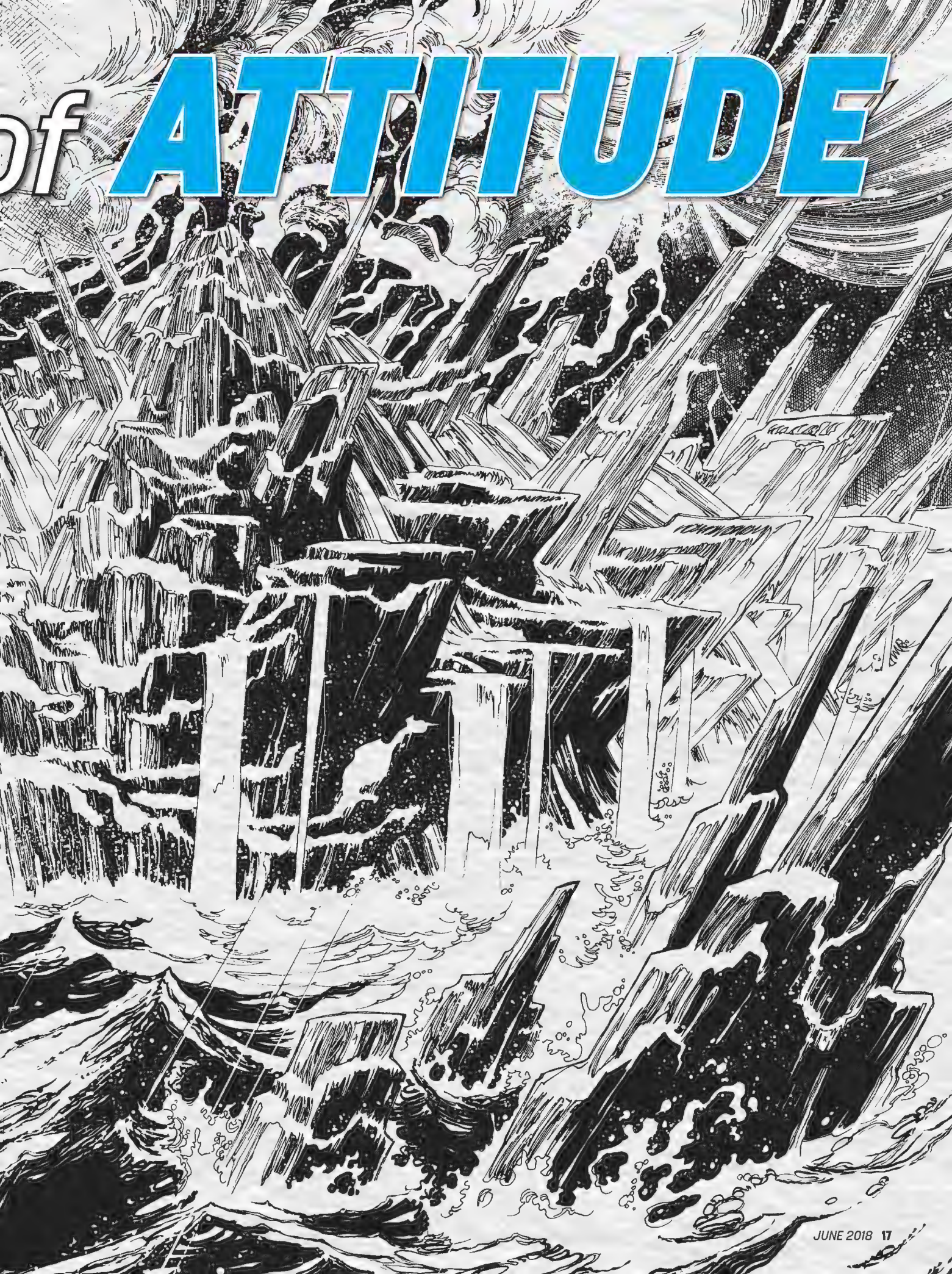
"My initial goal was this: Let Ivan go nuts and then I'll come in and then add to it," explains Bendis. "Then he went so nuts, there was nothing to add to it–which is the best. What Ivan did is what was in my initial pitch, but he really embraced–this should be uninhibited to anyone but Superman. I was doing research on the Bermuda Triangle for another project and why its uninhabitable and why it has such an air of mystery and about magnetic fields there and everything and it just felt like the perfect place for Superman to have true solitude."

When Bendis proposed the move in SUPERMAN #1's script, Reis immediately began thinking of how different and unique the new Fortress of Solitude could become.

"Beyond the mystery aspect surrounding the Bermuda Triangle itself, the new Fortress being an iceberg-like structure adds an extra element of mystery to the equation," says Reis from his studio in Brazil. "You can only see a part of it–the part above the water. The biggest part of it is hidden, inaccessible, with long, pointy crystals to keep everyone away."

Once the seed of the new Fortress took root, Reis couldn't help but start sketching out ideas. Breaking out his notebook, the superstar penciller began creating a new Fortress for a new age of the Man of Steel.

Take a peek at just some of the ideas that went into creating the new Fortress of Solitude before it debuts in **SUPERMAN #1, on sale July 11.**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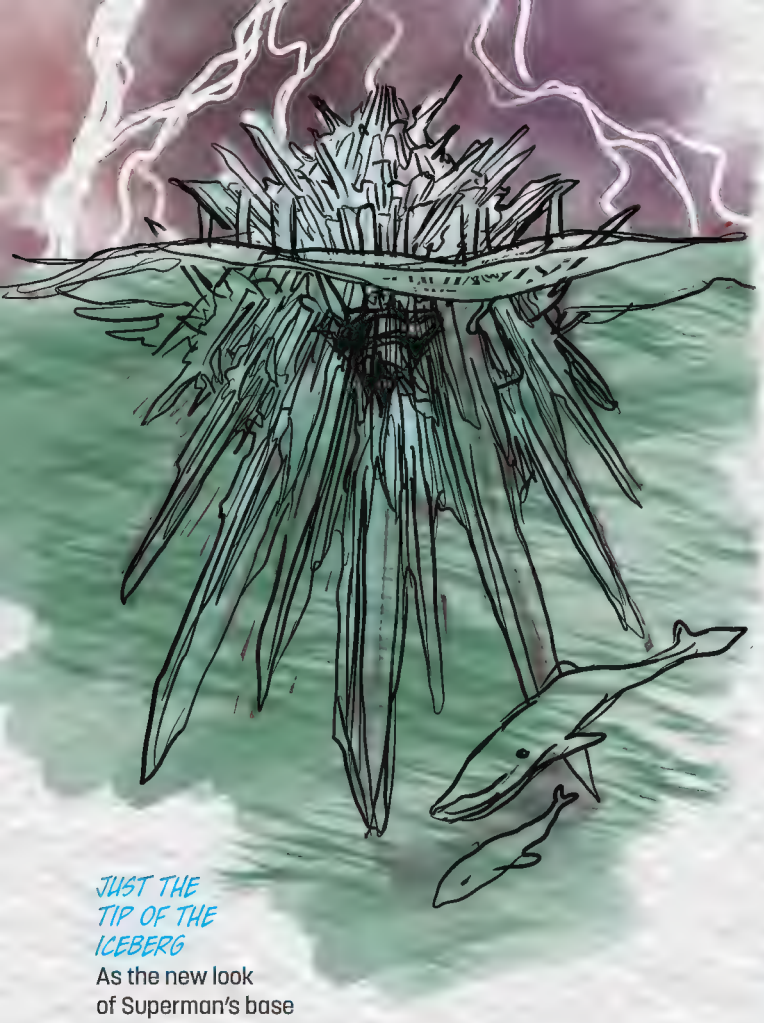


JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

As the new look of Superman's base began to take shape in Reis' mind, he originally envisioned a more alien and ominous design.

"My first idea was to have it above the sea level, but I decided to make it some kind of a giant iceberg-like structure where you only see part of it on the surface," Reis explains. "Alien technology holds it together in the same position, so it doesn't move with the currents or tide."

INTERIOR DECORATING

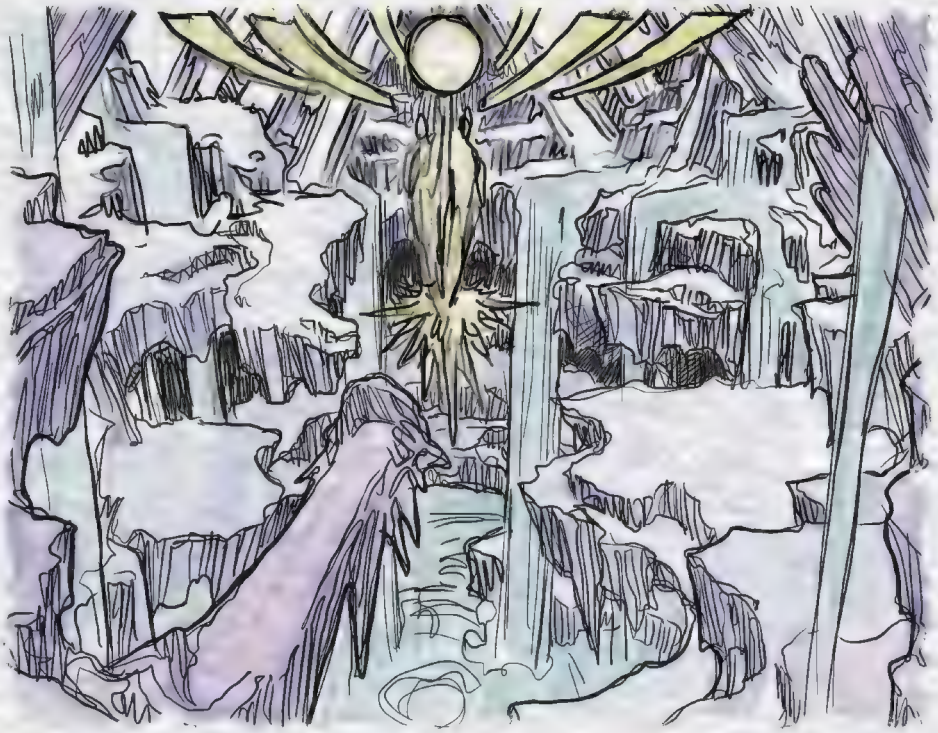
Reis explains that while the Fortress is technologically advanced, most humans can't recognize it.

"The statues are the central–and only–part of the main hall," reveals Reis. "The surroundings, with waterfalls and crystal cliffs, make it some sort of a shrine, a temple, created in homage to his parents. But it is also surrounded by high-tech gadgets, though our human eyes are not able to notice it."

WIDE-OPEN FLOOR PLAN

While endeavoring to make the new Fortress different and more excitingly modern than ever before, Reis also knew there were certain aspects the Fortress of Solitude had to have.

"When you enter the Fortress, the first space is a huge, empty area with just the statues of Kal-El's parents," notes Reis. "That, in a way, is a statement of how mysterious the Fortress is to outsiders. An invader, hoping to find all the Kryptonian technology there to steal, would find absolutely nothing. It would take further exploration to discover the secrets hidden in the Fortress. And they couldn't access those areas. There is no walkway, only a big room with different floors and levels, just like the classic movie from 1978. Superman can fly, so walkways would be pointless."

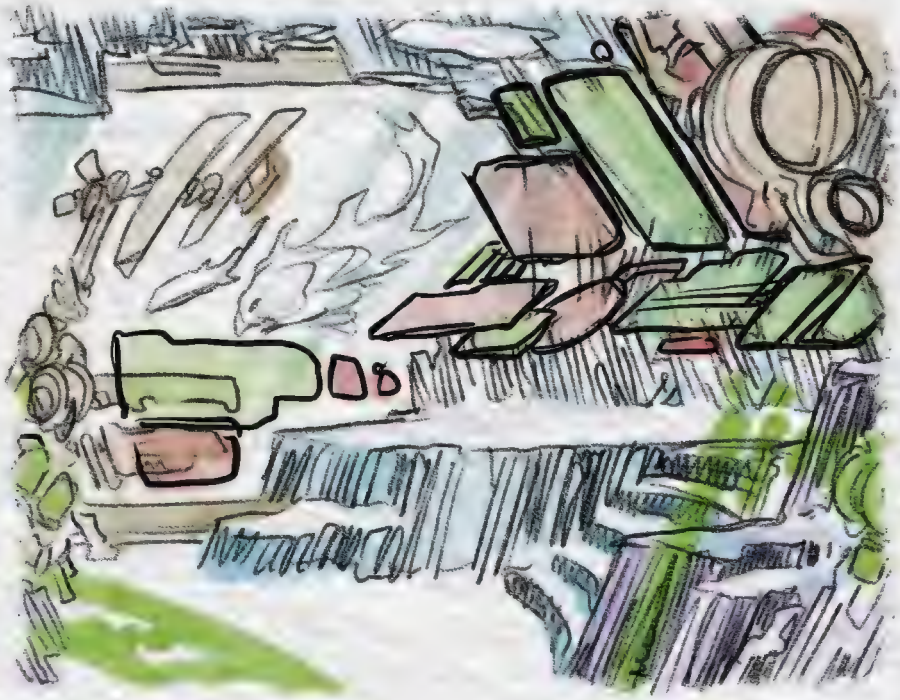


WATERFRONT PROPERTY

Designing a building located in the Bermuda Triangle, with storms always brewing overhead and waves crashing violently against its crystalline walls, Reis wanted to make sure water took on part of the role played by snow at the arctic Fortress.

"This new Fortress is surrounded by water, not ice. Water is movement, and I wanted to bring this idea to the Fortress," says Reis. "Its crystals are made from water, and it flows across the whole structure like a proverbial umbilical cord connecting the interior of the Fortress to the ocean outside.

"The waterfalls also bring a contemplative aspect to the main hall," continues the artist. "When I read the script referring to the Fortress as a place filled with technology, what came to my mind was exactly waterfalls and cliffs, because nature is the ultimate technology. We are part of a technology-oriented generation, surrounded by gadgets, screens and cutting-edge designs. By entering the Fortress, we would be confronted with this ultimate riddle: the technology is there, but we just can't see it because it is 'hidden' in the form of nature and crystals. No buttons, no touchscreens–not intuitive for a regular human being."



WE BOUGHT A ZOO!

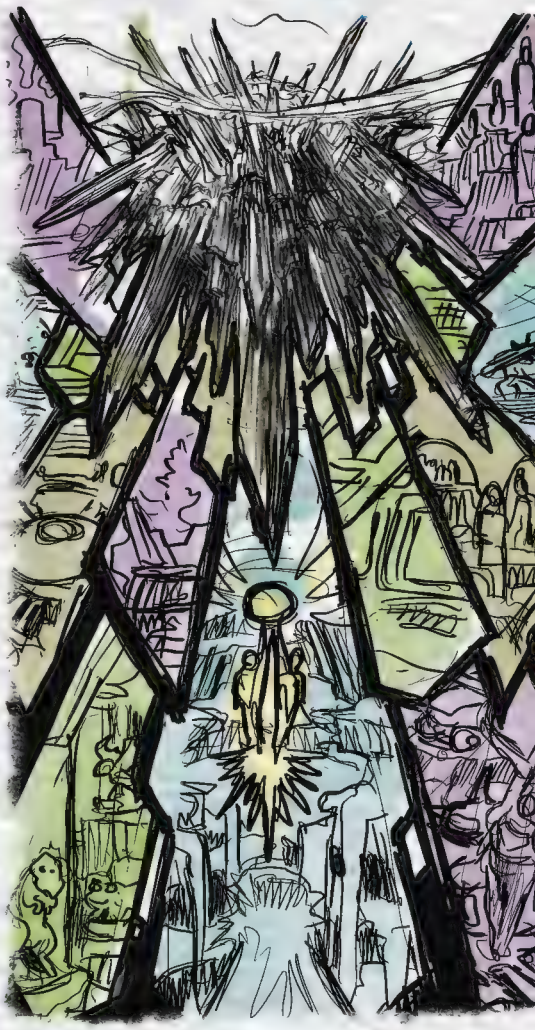
While Reis doesn't mind giving out an early look at the new Fortress, there are some areas he's already excited about expanding and exploring more in SUPERMAN every month.

"I'm excited to create the Zoo and its multileveled spaces," gushes Reis. "It's not a horizontal area: the Fortress is vertical, growing bigger as you go deeper and deeper."

NOT THE BATCAVE

It was tough for Reis to narrow down exactly what he wanted inside the new space. But it was much easier for him to figure out what he didn't want–a more modest take on the Dark Knight's underground digs, a.k.a. the Batcave.

"The main challenge was not to make it a clean version of the Batcave," admits Reis. "It should be something different. In most versions of the Batcave, you can see everything from any point you stand: the giant penny, the dinosaur, the Batmobile, the computer. Everything fits in a double or triple page. That doesn't apply to the Fortress. You've got to choose what you want to see, because the Fortress is bigger and more mysterious."



TITANS TOGETHER

The Titans head around the world to help those affected by the Source Wall's collapse

By Andrew M. Serwin • Sketches by Brandon Peterson

Nightwing's Titans team boasts a brand-new mission, and they're taking the fight directly to the Source (Wall).

Tasked by DC's Trinity–Batman, Wonder Woman and Superman–the Titans must investigate and contain the "Source Wall Events" plaguing Earth in the wake of NO JUSTICE. As if stopping Fourth World-related emergencies on Earth wasn't enough, Nightwing and the Titans are on a tight leash with the Justice League as well. One wrong move and not only is Earth in trouble, but the Titans go kaput–again.

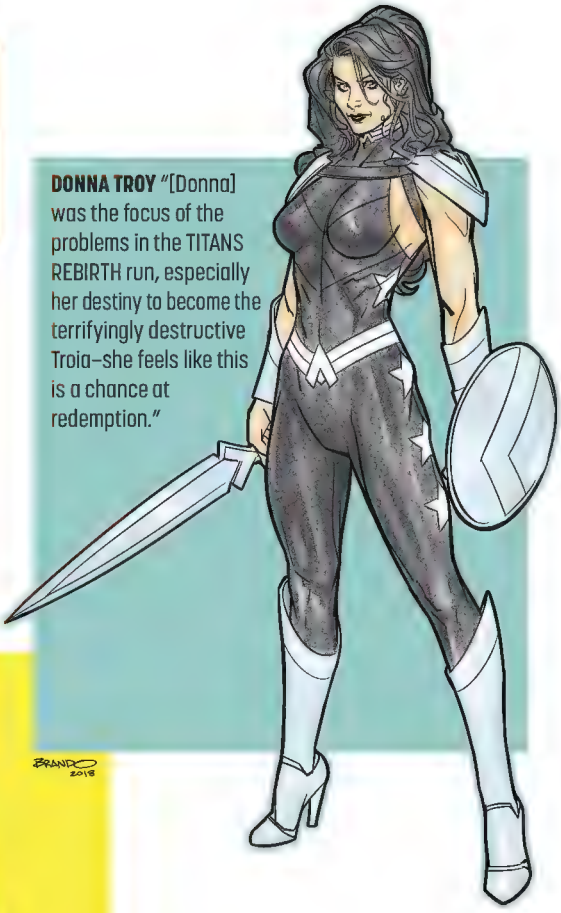
It's then up to Nightwing to recruit a team he can trust, so welcome Titans stalwarts Raven, Donna Troy and Beast Boy, joined by relative newcomer Steel (a.k.a. Natasha Irons) and League liaison Miss Martian.

"It's always important to make a team distinctive in its look, feel and remit. This new phase sharpens things up with a very specific and exciting dynamic," explains series writer Dan Abnett, joined by artist Brandon Peterson. "TITANS REBIRTH was a book about metahuman friends. The new Titans mix is much more volatile, much more 'professional.' I'm not saying they're NOT friends–they certainly are, and events will bond them, but they're people dealing with a problem in very different ways. Rather than working at cross-purposes, they need to pull together or the situation is hopeless...this team NEEDS to be a team–tailor-made to combat this crisis. Whether these guys get on personally or not is beside the point: these are the people Nightwing needs to get the job done."

After forming the new team in last month's TITANS SPECIAL #1, Nightwing, Raven, Beast Boy, Donna Troy, Steel and Miss Martian begin to track down those affected by the Source Wall event in **TITANS #23 on sale July 23.**

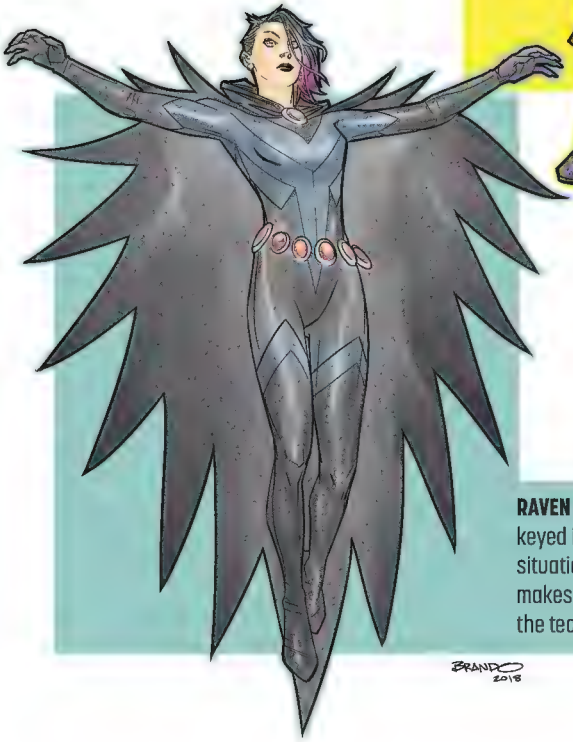
NIGHTWING "Nightwing is the leader. This is his full graduation to 'adult hero' status, and his chance to prove to his mentor that he can run a proper, serious team. As readers will know, the Rebirth Titans ran afoul of the JL for being 'loose cannons,' so Dick feels he has a lot to prove."

BEAST BOY "His powers are radically unstable. He's a victim of the Source Wall crisis, so he has both firsthand experience and a very personal drive to resolve it... for his own sake!"

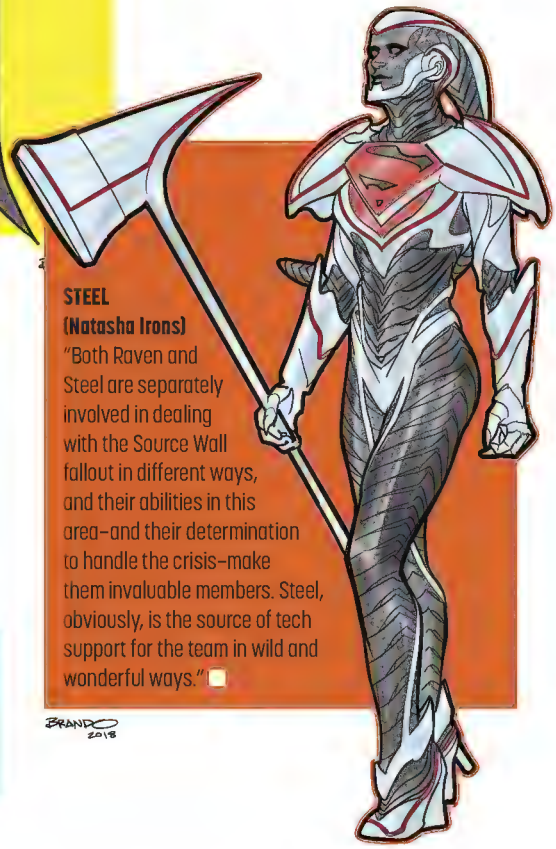


DONNA TROY "[Donna] was the focus of the problems in the TITANS REBIRTH run, especially her destiny to become the terrifyingly destructive Troia–she feels like this is a chance at redemption."

MISS MARTIAN "Miss Martian, an incredibly cool character, is joining them in what might be described as a 'babysitter' role, appointed by the Justice League."



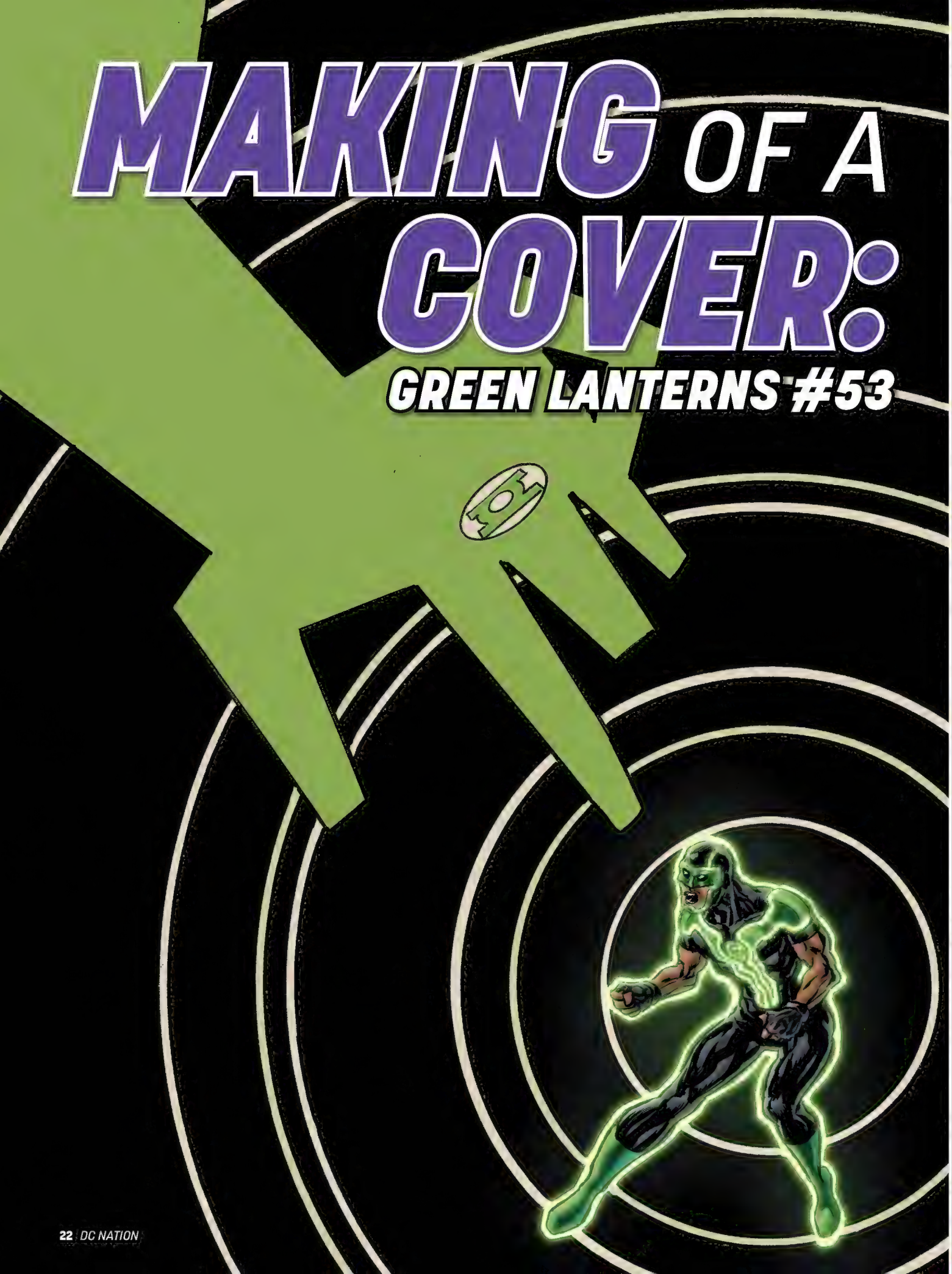
RAVEN "Raven–with her empathy keyed into the chaos of the situation–is their guide...which makes her the de facto co-leader of the team with Nightwing."



STEEL (Natasha Irons) "Both Raven and Steel are separately involved in dealing with the Source Wall fallout in different ways, and their abilities in this area–and their determination to handle the crisis–make them invaluable members. Steel, obviously, is the source of tech support for the team in wild and wonderful ways."

MAKING OF A COVER:

GREEN LANTERNS #53



Hey there, DC Nation! I'm Brian Cunningham, the Superman group editor at DC Comics. Each month, editors find themselves charged with concocting and executing several covers for the series under their purview.

Covers are a tricky thing, though.

For one thing, each cover in a series must contrast compositionally from previous issues because many times they get racked together. And on a macro scale, each issue shares rack space with an entire DC Universe line of 40-plus comics each month. All of which must be compositionally different from each other and still stand apart from the more than 400 series being produced in the extremely competitive comic book market. No stress, right??

But editors can't panic. We need to keep it simple and produce a compelling image to sell comics. Allow me to walk you through a typical process of how a cover comes together, using GREEN LANTERNS #53, drawn by the super-talented Mike Perkins, as an example.

How'd we get to this beauty? Follow me...

1 CONCEPT

It begins with an idea.

The editor engages with the writer and artist to come up with compelling ideas for what could go on the cover. Many times, covers are conceptualized before a plot or script is even written. Usually, we have an outline of what is upcoming, so we start there.

I prefer to come at the team with some springboard ideas just to get the conversation started. But for this cover, series writer Dan Jurgens had the foresight to incorporate some cover ideas into his issue outline for Perkins. It helps that Dan is also an exceptionally talented artist himself and has drawn hundreds of covers in his career.

For GREEN LANTERNS #53, Dan's suggestions were:

- Some way of making Simon Baz look guilty. Even if it's the other Green Lanterns accusing him. Or maybe isolated in a spotlight of sorts? Like being questioned by cops?

- Hal Jordan in battle against the Ravagers.

- Something that hints at the state of chaos emerging within the Green Lantern Corps. Maybe even the idea that, for a couple of them, a hint of fear can be a component.

2 SKETCHES, ROUND ONE

Mike Perkins took those and came up with these three sketch compositions:

"For GREEN LANTERNS #53, we were hoping to portray the suspicion that had landed upon the shoulders of Simon Baz and the accusations heading in his direction from his colleagues in the Green Lantern corps," Perkins explains. "There's a state of disorganization and chaos running through the very marrow of the Corps during the run that Dan Jurgens and I are collaborating on."

The one I gravitated more toward was sketch C's "Accused," with the fingers pointing at Simon.

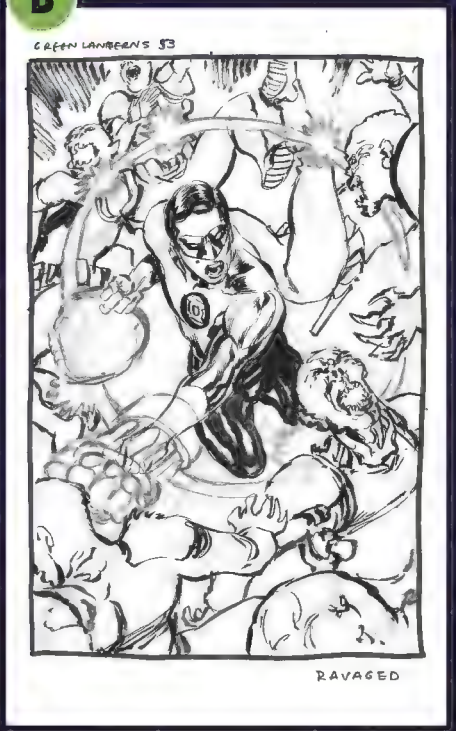
At that point, the series' associate editor, Jessica Chen, took these and ran them up the proverbial flagpole for approval, highlighting sketch C as our favorite. Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras has the final say over what sketches get approved.

"I liked the direction Mike was taking with his 'guilty' approach," explains Harras. "And I wanted to push it more, make Simon's pose more dynamic and, importantly, more reactive. Would Simon be angry about this? Shocked or stunned? And who is accusing him? I wanted to see more of those things that reflect the dire situation Simon is in."

So we went back to Mike for another round of sketches. Sometimes we can go back to an artist several times before we find something that works, but usually not more than two or three takes.

A

B



C

3 SKETCHES, ROUND TWO

When Jess and I gave Mike and Dan the feedback, Mike proved what a champ he is by providing four more sketches that elevated the concept even further.

"After the first round of roughs and the feedback from Bob Harras, it was decided to try for a more dynamic approach, and to concentrate on Simon's reaction," Perkins says. "I don't think we wanted to be entirely specific about which characters were the main accusers, so the pointed hands coming in at Baz from the foreground or from all sides seemed to fit perfectly.

"But then I decided to throw something else into the ring which not only came from left field but from the field over the road... across a lane of busy traffic...through a forest...and over a creek...whilst being buffeted by 70 mile-per-hour winds in its progress to try and reach the pitcher."

I really liked the "beyond left field" design-y image of the jagged green hand pointing at Simon in sketch G. That would stand out on a rack with 400-plus covers.

But I felt pretty confident sketch F's "Simon in Spotlight" would get the nod. It ticked off all the boxes Bob laid out for us. But Bob threw us a curveball and chose sketch G!

"Mike's cover concepts were all engaging, but the more graphic image in the last sketch looked different from anything else we were putting on a cover for the month," explains Harras. "It also evoked a larger-than-life sense of drama about Simon for the issue. It may not be a literal moment from the story, but it makes you pause and wonder what it represents."

According to Perkins, this was precisely his goal: "I'm a huge fan of design-led covers that are still able to tell a story in a single image," Perkins says. "I will look for inspiration from fields outside of the comics industry, taking in music album designs and cinema posters. This particular inspiration came from Saul Bass' magnificent design for the poster of the film The Man with the Golden Arm.

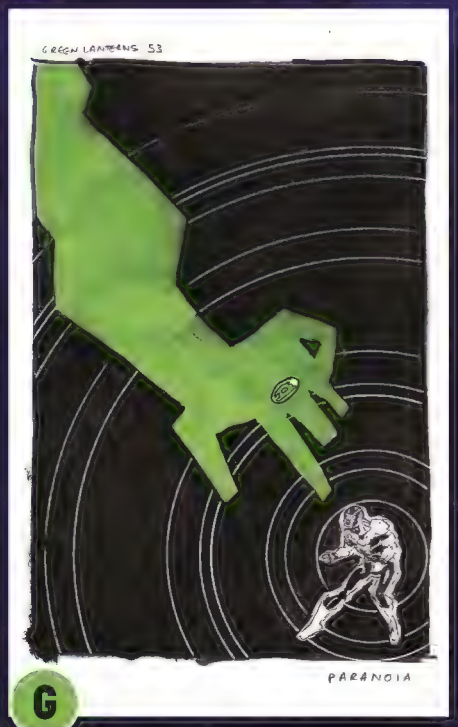
"Seeing as we wanted to avoid portraying the particular accusers, the approach on that poster just screamed out at me with the concentric circles focusing in and emphasizing the accusatory gaze on Simon, who recoils from his colleagues, forcing him into the actions he pursues in the following issues.

"Truthfully, never for a moment did I think this option would be considered, let alone chosen!"

D

E

F



G

4 INKS (OPPOSITE)

Mike went straight from sketch to final inks. He didn't deviate at all from the sketch, which some artists do as they are working on the final art–then the cover might deviate from the approved sketch. Sometimes the artist discovers parts of the cover sketch don't work quite as well on oversized 11 inch by 17 inch drawing paper. As an editor, we have a tricky tightrope to walk. It's usually not ideal when the final art is not what we signed off on...and sometimes we'll ask for extra tweaks to bring it back closer to what was approved. Or not–sometimes what's different is an improvement on the sketch. Every situation is unique. Thankfully, GLS #53 required no back and forth!

MIKE PERKINS
GREEN LANTERNS

MIKE PERKINS
53

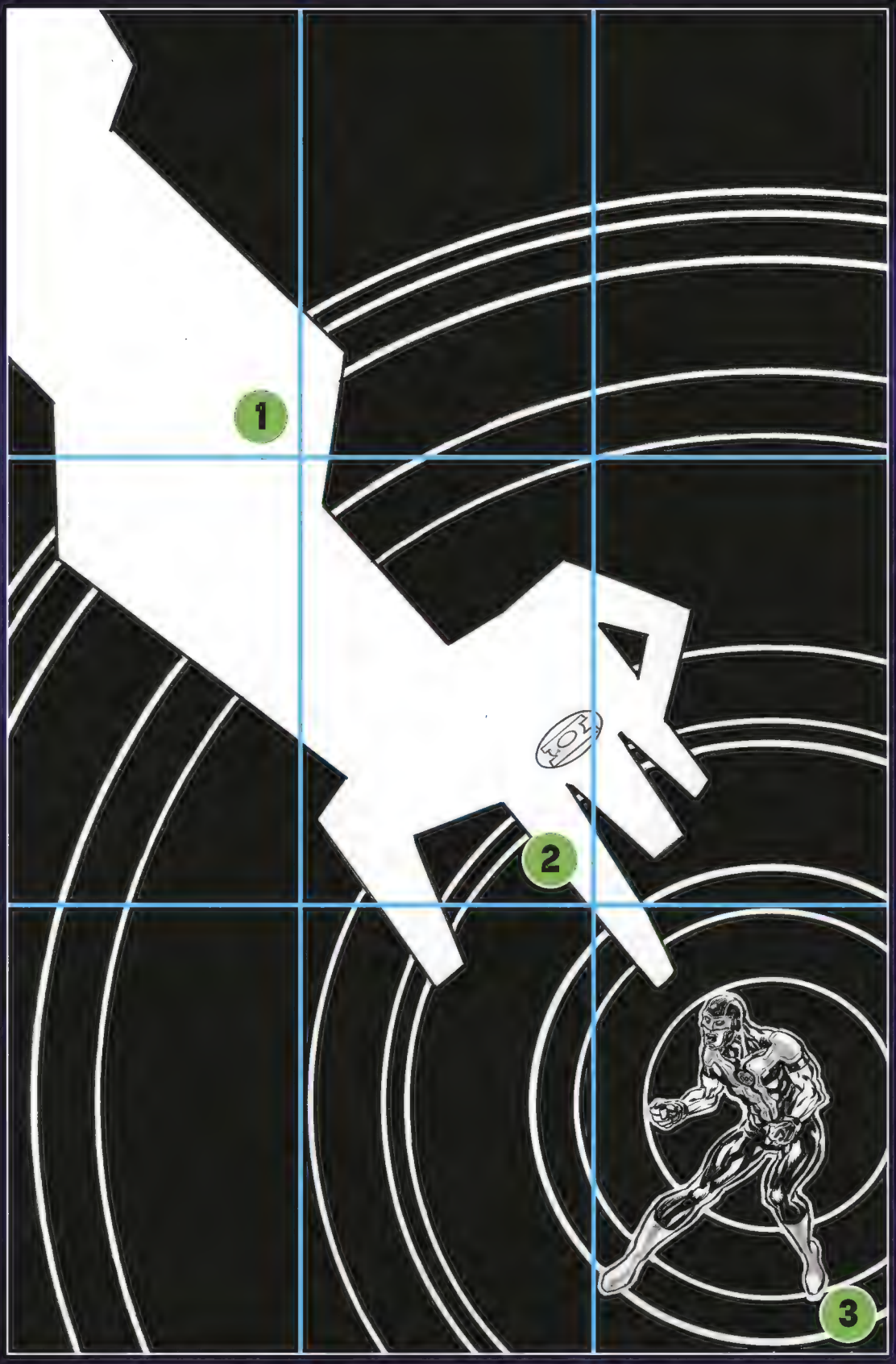
K. KUBERT

5 COLOR

We approached Brian and Kristy Miller of Hi-Fi Design for color on this one. As color jobs go, this one was fairly simple.

"I've always enjoyed Mike Perkins' art," Brian says. "On some of the other series he's worked on, Mike's done these really cool juxtapositions between realistic art and art that's more iconographic, and that's how this illustration looks to me. It reminds me of some of the Saul Bass title sequence art from old Hitchcock films. The goal is to make the hand and the rings have that sort of flat color, but then have the figure of Simon Baz be developed in more of a realistic fashion."

And that's how it's done! Now that I've walked you through how a typical cover is done from A to Z, I better get a move on. The next few covers to GREEN LANTERNS aren't gonna draw themselves!



WHY IT WORKS

Mike Perkins' composition for GREEN LANTERNS #53 succeeds on a number of different levels. Let's go under the hood and explore them...

1 It adheres to the rule of thirds.

Your brain uses the rule of thirds constantly and you're likely not even conscious of it. To illustrate the principle behind the rule of thirds, imagine any image–a comic book cover, a movie screen, a TV screen, etc.–and break it down into thirds both horizontally and vertically. Research has determined that the brain naturally gravitates to the spots where the lines intersect. I call them hot spots.

As a result, artists place important information near those hot spots.

2 Notice how the jagged green arm thrusts at an angle going through two hot spots, and the pointed finger falls right into the lower right hot spot.

The image "reads" left to right.

In Western culture, we read from left to right, so any movement (or illusion of movement, as this green arm is a static image) toward the right is something the brain is trained to do as a reflex.

3 Simon is "trapped" within the subconscious lower corner "box."

The concentric circles "lasso" the two main objects together.

THE GREAT RACE

10 KID FLASH

"Wallace is still young and learning how to control his powers–his bravado is a little faster than he is," explains Josh Williamson. "Once he gets a handle on his abilities, he has the potential to be the fastest, but it's going to take some time and experience."

9 SHAZAM

"He's been granted the speed of Hermes and can run as fast as lightning bolts, but even the swiftness of the protector of the Rock of Eternity can't give him an edge over these speedsters."

8 GOD SPEED

"When August first got his powers, he was maybe faster than Barry Allen, but Barry and Wallace siphoned the speed he stole from them. Now that his powers are more in check, Godspeed needs redemption if he's ever going to tap into his true speed."

7 WONDER WOMAN

"Diana is the greatest warrior in the DC Universe. She was trained by the Amazons. She understands the mechanics of running better than anyone on this list, which gives her an edge over the competition."

6 CHEETAH

"She has zero hesitation in her movements and a no mercy mindset, which helps her stay focused on her goal–a swift kill. Her unrelenting drive makes her one of the fastest threats in the DCU."

The "Flash War" storyline currently playing out in the pages of THE FLASH pits Barry Allen against Wally West, but it got us thinking. So we asked writer Josh Williamson, in a hypothetical contest between ALL the super-speed characters in the DC Universe, who would cross that finish line first...?

Original art by Scott Kolins and Luis Guerrero

PICK UP **THE FLASH** AS THE SPEEDSTERS BATTLE IN **"FLASH WAR"** ON SALE NOW!

5 BLACK RACER

"It's not just a matter of speed with the Black Racer. It's that you can never escape him, death is always coming. That's part of the Black Racer's speed. He's always there when you least expect it. Hero, villain, god, human—the Black Racer will always catch you."

4 SUPERMAN

"The Man of Steel is unmatched when flying in the air, able to arrive and save the day in the blink of an eye. But once he puts those two feet onto solid ground he can't quite crack the top three."

3 REVERSE-FLASH

"He's one of the most evil and obsessed characters in the DCU, driven solely by his desperation to be his childhood hero, the Flash. It's that desperation that ultimately slows him down. He can never let himself be faster than the person he wants to be."

2 BARRY ALLEN

"What was funny [about working with Jim] was, he designed something. Everybody loved it. We approved it and then he kept designing it. So, just years. He's a massive talent. He's constantly drawing and I had such admiration for him for so many years and it's just got up tenfold since I got here."

1 WALLY WEST

"Wally understands the spiritual side of the Speed Force, and with that understanding, he trusts the Speed Force. Even though he may not fully grasp the science behind it, his faith lets Wally tap into the full breadth of the Speed Force. He doesn't run through the Speed Force, the Speed Force runs through him."

DRIVEN:

VIKTOR BOGDANOVIC

Swiss-born artist Viktor Bogdanovic clawed his way from unkown wanna-be to mainstream comics star by being anything but neutral

By Michael Nixon

Dan Abnett just didn't see it.

After teaming with legendary artist John Romita Jr. to launch the art-driven New Age of Heroes title THE SILENCER, the 52-year-old writer just couldn't understand how young upstart artist Viktor Bogdanovic could replace an iconic superstar who'd left his mark on DC characters from Batman to Superman–not to mention the impact he'd made for decades at Marvel Comics.

"Oh, that's not exactly what I was expecting," thought Abnett as he reviewed his new collaborator's first pencilled pages.

But by the time Bogdanovic's first issue was complete, Abnett realized his new artist was more talented than he'd realized. While the writer saw pencils and inks in stages as works in progress, he recognized after the fact that Bogdanovic had executed those pages exactly as he'd planned, from the first layout to the final product.

"There's not a stroke wasted," remarks an astonished Abnett, who's tough to surprise after a career making hit comics across the medium. "Viktor clearly has this precision that sees ahead of the game, down to the composition of the page. He's not only composing in terms of the art, but he's composing it in terms of how the placement of the dialogue bubbles and the color weight will balance the page out."

His precision is a skill that the Berlin-based artist puts the majority of his time into perfecting. After a morning routine of coffee, breakfast and working on page layouts, Bogdanovic says, "I go home and draw until late in the night. That's pretty much all I do."

> "I go home and draw until late in the night. That's pretty much all I do."
>
> -VIKTOR BOGDONOVIC

And, for the most part, that's all Bogdanovic has wanted to do for a while now–draw the biggest, baddest and most iconic superheroes in the world.

"I read a ton of Superman as a kid. I think my first comic was an issue of ACTION COMICS that my mom brought home," recalls Bogdanovic. "Then I started drawing my own comics at the age of 11 or 12 and tried to sell them to my dad. I sold zero copies, but don't tell anyone."

This slow start didn't dissuade Bogdanovic, who kept at his dream. "I did go to an art school in my hometown, Basel (Switzerland), for a year, but we didn't draw much there, so I never had proper art training. I just drew a lot. Endless hours since I was a kid."

As it turns out, perseverance is the key to the Bogdanovic method: "I was terrible, but I got better with every page, and I slowly built up the stamina to sit and draw all day. That's very important for anyone who wants to draw comics professionally."

The lesson that Bogdanovic tries to impart to aspiring artists comes from a deeply personal place for him. In a September 2016 blog post on deviantart.com, Bogdanovic bared his soul when he wrote of how he was "living on social welfare, drawing like a madman in his little studio/bedroom/living room/music room/broom closet ----hole of an apartment" when he got offered a real illustration gig: drawing body piercings for a web page.

If his verbose opinions shock you–he declared Silencer "cooler than Batman" on social media–or you find his meteoric rise surprising, just know that his confidence comes from someone who struggled to make his dreams come true. That confidence is borne on the back of his amazing abilities–his work practically demands to be looked at and appreciated.

And that's a big factor in how Bogdanovic broke in at DC.

SUPER BODY OF WORK

Like many aspiring comics artists, Bogdanovic often sent samples to editors in the United States at the major publishers. Luckily for the then-wanna-be, his samples were so strong, they immediately caught the attention of DC editor Alex Antone, who was looking for an artist for the ARKHAM KNIGHT series, based on the popular 2015 Batman video game.

"His samples had a bigger than life quality akin to some of our top artists without trying to mimic anyone else's style," recalls Antone, who worked with Bogdanovic on 12 issues of ARKHAM KNIGHT. "His work on ARKHAM KNIGHT showed not only what he could do with clean, dynamic storytelling, but also what he was growing into being capable of. Every page got better and better."

Following his work on the video game tie-in, Bogdanovic moved to a Suicide Squad mini-series featuring Deadshot and Katana, then launched the NEW SUPER-MAN series before joining the team of the very comic that inspired him: ACTION COMICS.

Not only did Bogdanovic get to draw the Man of Steel, he came onboard for an arc featuring classic super-foe General Zod.

"Viktor actually ended up only doing [issue] #983, but that's because he impressed us so much that we wanted to move him onto a bigger story," notes editor Paul Kaminski. "It was really some remarkable stuff, what he did with General Zod for that one issue. It's the only issue I send out for reference these days for General Zod–Viktor really nailed it."

Bogdanovic advanced to the next story in the ACTION run, "The Oz Effect," featuring the return of Superman's Kryptonian father, Jor-El, now transformed into the villainous Mr. Oz.

"It was going to be this big story that paid off this longstanding character arc. And we felt that would be a great platform for Viktor, because he was showing so much promise," follows Kaminski.

Teaming the young artist with seasoned writer-artist Dan Jurgens was part of the appeal, too: "Jurgens is a master storyteller, and that was one of the things that we felt, pairing him with Viktor. He and Dan pushed each other to think differently."

> "The plan is to make the best books I can possibly make..."
>
> -VIKTOR BOGDONOVIC

But it also led to conflict about what went on the page.

"We've only had one great argument. And it was in ACTION COMICS #991–the last part of 'The Oz Effect,'" recalls Kaminski, "Superman's slumped over the side of the building and he's hearing the problems of the world. And the word balloons looked like they were crushing him, and he was at the bottom of that." The pages came back with something off. "The body language that Viktor used was a little too upright. He was coming at it from the angle of trying to make it a cool drawing. And we had this back and forth and found a way to marry the two. I've learned to trust his instincts."

DO-MY-BIDDING WAR

In the aftermath, a battle sparked between editors over who got to work with Bogdanovic next. While Antone had a fun pitch–a TEEN TITANS run tuned to Bogdanovic's humorist sensibilities–Kaminski came in swinging with THE SILENCER. As an added bonus, the series about a former Leviathan assassin balancing her current family life with an old war between killers also came with the challenge of the young artist taking over for a seasoned superstar, Romita Jr.

Thanks to that first issue of ACTION, Kaminski knew he had his man. "I pitched him on THE SILENCER, with General Zod ringing in the back of my mind. I was thinking that this thing is gonna have a lot of bad guys that will be a lot of fun for Viktor to draw, and I think he can do it well."

Kaminski's faith was rewarded: "He hopped on following Romita's run and he got the opportunity to design some things." As Abnett's faith in him grew, Bogdanovic took a bigger role in the series. "By #6, he was choreographing fight scenes that were light years beyond what he was even doing on #4. I kept asking him what sorts of weird art steroids he was taking."

For his part, Bogdanovic is "pretty sure that SILENCER #6 is the most insane thing I've ever drawn. It's basically just one huge crazy battle royal action sequence followed by even more action. Did I mention action?" But he's already looking forward to issue #7. "Hopefully, I can end my run with my best issue yet. It's gonna be a lot of action again, so I look forward to that."

Next, Bogdanovic moves on to a top secret project, but he's not too focused on what comes after that. "I'm way too obsessed with whatever's in front of me at the current time, so I can't really see too far into the future. The plan is to make the best books I can possibly make," explains the artist as he puts the finishing touches on one of his last SILENCER pages.

"In only a few years at DC, I was lucky enough to work on a Batman title, to draw Superman in ACTION COMICS and to help create a great new character for DC with Kenan Kong, New Super-Man," boasts Bogdanovic. "So, whatever comes next, I'm sure it's gonna be fantastic."

ARTISTS TO WATCH

Five more artists making waves at DC Comics

1 JORGE JIMENEZ
(JUSTICE LEAGUE)

The JUSTICE LEAGUE artist's bombastic and dynamic style shines when he's drawing DC's biggest heroes taking on the biggest and most dangerous threats.

2 RAFA SANDOVAL
(HAL JORDAN & THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS)

With a classic yet modern style that relies on both great storytelling and drawing heroes bigger than life, Sandoval shines whether he's drawing Hal Jordan in space or the Flash racing on the ground.

3 STJEPAN SEJIC
(JUSTICE LEAGUE ODYSSEY)

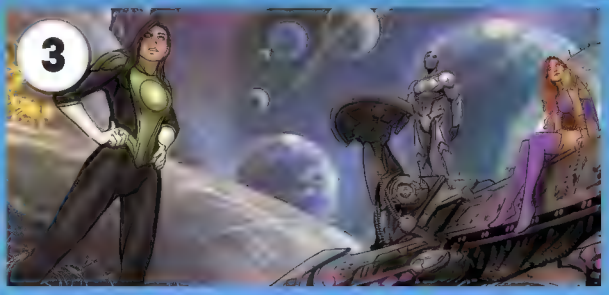
Detailed, with a painterly quality, Sejic makes anything from the depths of Atlantis to the streets of Green Arrow's home turf look stunning. His ability to draw the eye exactly where it needs to go on a page makes him an asset to any book.

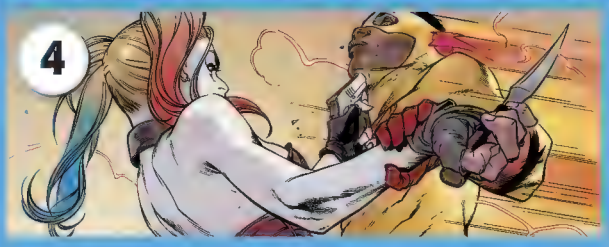
4 ROBSON ROCHA
(TEEN TITANS)

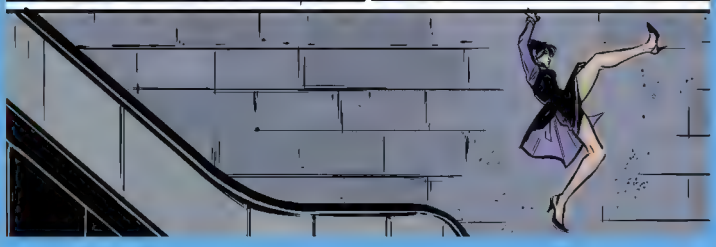
After a run on a weekly series and GREEN LANTERNS, Rocha's quickly become one of DC's most refined and reliable storytellers, turning in pages that hit both the emotional and action beats that make great comics.

5 JOËLLE JONES
(CATWOMAN)

A double threat, the CATWOMAN writer and artist never skimps on details and finds ways to make the extraordinary elements of the DC Universe look unbelievable and yet realistic.







GREETINGS from the...

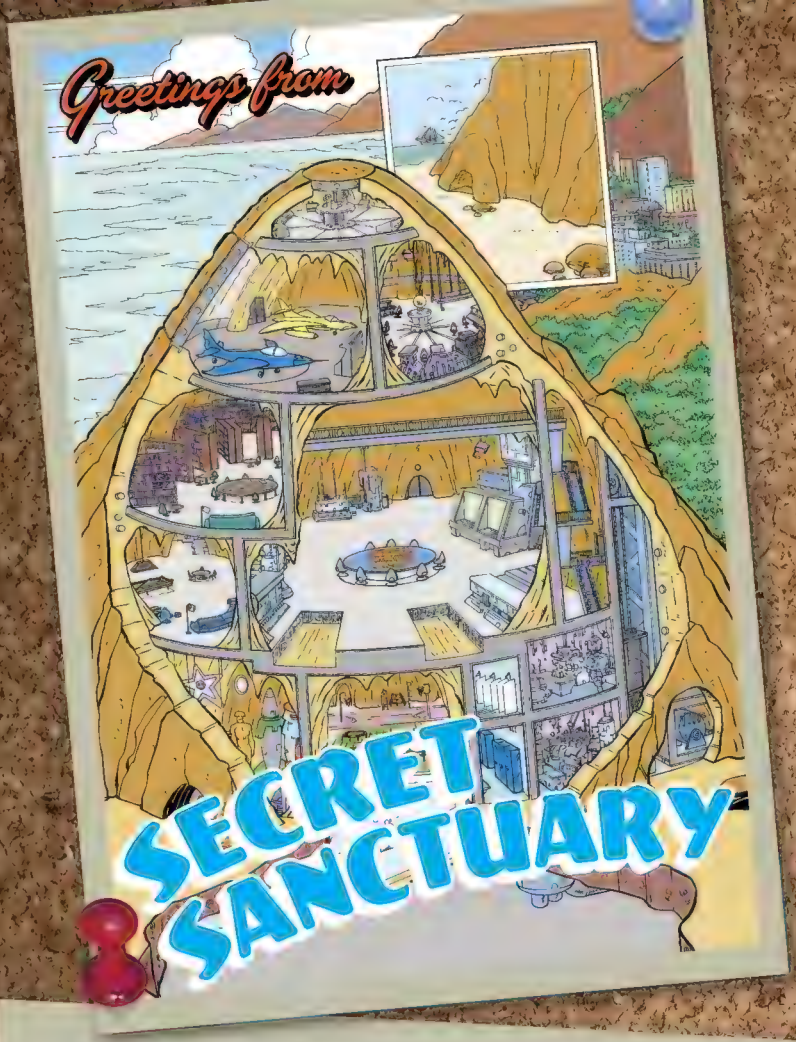
JUSTICE LEAGUE scribe Scott Snyder appraises the team's past headquarters when building his ultimate superhero base! *By Andrew Marino*

The Justice League has operated out of a cave, a high-tech moon base and everything in between–including Detroit!

In the pages of his newly launched JUSTICE LEAGUE, Scott Snyder–along with artists Jim Cheung and Jorge Jimenez–gives the team a new address with the freshly minted Hall of Justice. [Editor's note: The Hall of Justice first debuted on the Super Friends cartoon in 1973 and was introduced into DC continuity in 2007 before terrorists later destroyed it.]

So what does it take to build the definitive HQ for DC's premier super-team? Snyder gives us a walking tour of the team's past headquarters, noting what worked, what didn't and how it all informed the Justice League's new digs.

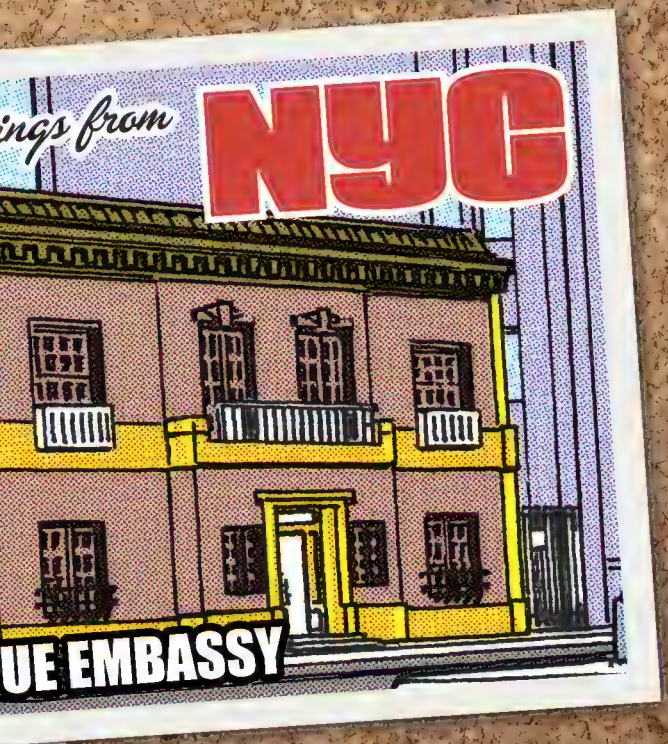
THE HALL OF JUSTICE
(First Appearance 2018)
WHAT IS IT: The new Justice League HQ based in Washington, D.C.
SNYDER SAYS: "The Hall of Justice to me is based on the strengths of inclusion and celebration. I wanted it open to the public, a symbol of heroism, and [I wanted to] give a sense that you too can be one of these heroes. It needed to be accessible to people. I wanted to create something simple, yet iconic and in the public eye. But our Hall of Justice also has secret portals that takes you to the Justice League Odyssey's base, and the JL Dark team has a secret magic area in the basement. I wanted it to feel like a place that's mapped and knowable and you can walk in and see the costumes and the trophy room and the entryway. But you also know, almost like the Museum of Natural History, three-quarters of the building is completely unknown and mysterious to you at the same time. I wanted to both preserve the sense of approachability as well as a sense of mystery and wonder. So turn the doorknob and come in; we're really excited to have you."



THE SECRET SANCTUARY
(First Appearance 1960)
WHAT WAS IT: A massive cavern located in Happy Harbor, Rhode Island
PRO: "What I love about it was all the heroes were not only in this one place, but the place itself catered to all the most wondrous and fantastic aspects of their mythologies," Snyder says. "So you had the vehicles on one level and secret passages down to the library that had books on the arcane. Places like that maintain a sense of mystery and wonder that there's always a corner you haven't explored. It was sort of a celebration of superhero lunacy, while also being a clubhouse for all your favorite superheroes. It was where you always wanted to be."
CON: "The moniker, the Secret Sanctuary, is something I wanted to veer away from. I didn't really want something to be secret or almost exclusive. I wanted the Hall of Justice to be grounded and open to the public. I didn't want something that would be tucked away in a mountain."

THE JUSTICE LEAGUE COMPOUND
(First Appearance 1984)
WHAT WAS IT: An abandoned factory in Detroit, Michigan
PRO: "[Locating the heroes] in an urban environment, when urban decay and fear was so prevalent, was a really powerful move by DC," notes Snyder. "Placing this team in the heart of Detroit really put them right with the public, and made them feel like they're right there with society."
CON: "You always risk, when a base is so centralized in one place, that the concept becomes too provincial. I think it's an important thing to try, especially when the creative team is invested in that place. But I think you run the risk of being circumscribed by the limitations of how real-world that city is."

THE JUSTICE LEAGUE EMBASSY
(First Appearance 1987)
WHAT WAS IT: UN-style embassies located in major cities across the globe
PRO: "I liked the idea that [the Embassy] was connected between groups, and it wasn't remote. I grew up in New York City, and the idea of a United Nations and embassies was a real-world and grounded approach to a superhero base. With all that was going in the world at the time, when relations with Russia were thawing, there was a level of excitement around the superheroes being a part of this diplomatic tapestry."
CON: "Nowadays I want to go with something a little more magical and bombastic. I think all the stuff that was built with the Embassy is baked into the Hall of Justice, but I didn't want a governmental entity watching over the League. I didn't want the question of: Are our heroes going to turn on us? Do they need to be watched?"



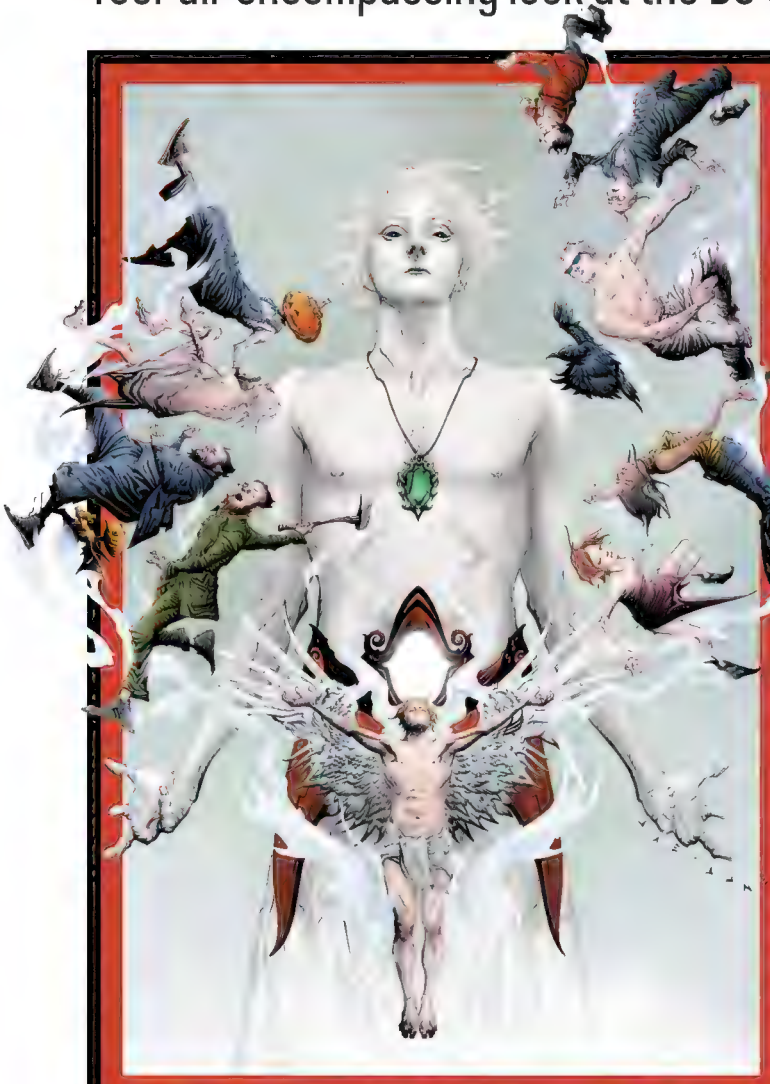
HELLO FROM THE JLA WATCHTOWER!

THE WATCHTOWER (First Appearance 1997)
WHAT WAS IT: Two HQs used the Watchtower name: an orbiting super-satellite and a high-tech moon base.
PRO: "The thing that was so inspiring about the Watchtower was its grandeur and majesty. That sense of that otherworldly wonder. These heroes were so larger-than-life that their base wasn't even on Earth; it was made of these alien metals and just so science fiction. The idea of putting the Big 7 on a base that wasn't Earth-bound but that overlooked everything felt right for the message that Grant [Morrison] was trying to send. [T]hese guys are huge in mythology, in heroism, in emotion, and in scope."
CON: "The only con with the idea behind this base is that they're so remote. It feels like the heroes are far away and unreachable–that they're gods up in space or aliens. That can be an amazing thing if you're going for that, but I want to remind the reader how inspiring, approachable and fun these heroes are."

THE BEST SUPERHERO HQ ON THE PLANET APPEARS **TWICE-MONTHLY** IN THE PAGES OF **JUSTICE LEAGUE!**

DIRECT CURRENTS

Your all-encompassing look at the DC Universe for August 2018



BOOK TO WATCH

THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE SPECIAL (August 8)

After a two-decade slumber, Neil Gaiman's magical, mystical universe of dreams and nightmares finally wakes up this August.

In THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE SPECIAL #1–drawn by a cadre of super talent Bilquis Evely, Tom Fowler, Dominike Stanton and Max and Sebastian Fiumara–dream a little dream of your favorite Sandman characters–plus some exciting additions–as Gaiman welcomes a handpicked cavalcade of new collaborators to the all-new Sandman Universe.

The 48-page special was dreamt up by Gaiman and co-writers Simon Spurrier, Nalo Hopkinson, Kat Howard and Dan Watters at a summit in New Orleans this past January. "It was amazing," says SANDMAN UNIVERSE editor Molly Mahan. "Eight straight hours sitting with master storyteller Neil Gaiman, discussing the art of story and this world he's created, with its deep mythology and wide cast of characters."

Spurrier (*Cry Havok*) kicks things off with Lucien losing a book and Matthew the Raven on the hunt to find their king in the Waking World. Along the way, we are introduced to an intriguing new character named Dora–caught in a space beyond the realm of Dreams.

"There's a huge mystery surrounding her," says Mahan. "Why is she there? Why is she so angry at Dream–specifically Morpheus?"

Meanwhile, as Matthew continues his search, Nalo Hopkinson (*Brown Girl in the Ring*) introduces a new House to the Sandman Universe, where the goddess Erzulie resides. Kat Howard (*An Unkindness of Magicians*) visits Timothy Hunter, a young boy who becomes the world's most powerful magician in his dreams–and the world's most terrifying villain in his nightmares. Finally, we find Lucifer, penned by veteran scribe Dan Watters (*The Shadow Leviathan*), somewhere completely unexpected.

"There's a lot of loss, and searching for identity," Mahan adds. "For example, Lucien seems to be losing his mind, Dora doesn't know who she is or why she's in the Dreaming and neither does the reader. Tim's grappling with the ethics of what it is to be the best, while Lucifer questions meaning and function post-Hell and post-Lux." ■

Neil Gaiman, Si Spurrier, Nalo Hopkinson, Kat Howard & Dan Watters (w) Bilquis Evely, Dama, Tom Fowler, Max & Sebastian Fiumara (a)

ACTION COMICS #1002

ACTION COMICS #1002 (AUG. 22)

A bold new era of the adventures of the Man of Steel continues as bodies fall from the sky and buildings burn around the City of Tomorrow. Even Superman must wonder how well he knows the city he protects as an unknown criminal element begins to rise throughout Metropolis.

Brian Michael Bendis (w) Patrick Gleason (a)

ADVENTURES OF THE SUPER SONS #1 (AUG. 1)

The Super Sons are back in an all-new 12-issue miniseries written by Peter J. Tomasi! Check out the lost and secret adventures of Damian Wayne (Robin) and Jon Kent (Superboy) in this flashback miniseries that takes a deep dive into the bombastic bromance between the sons of the DC Universe's greatest heroes. It's an epic dual storyline that transcends current events, as Superboy and Robin find themselves targets of an interstellar team of young badasses called the Gang.

Peter J. Tomasi (w) Carlo Barberi(a)

AQUAMAN #39 (AUG. 15)

Guest-starring Task Force X, and continuing from SUICIDE SQUAD #45, also on sale this month! After Atlantis rises to the surface once more, Aquaman finds himself outnumbered and outgunned when Amanda Waller sends in the worst of the worst–the Suicide Squad–to send the Lost City straight to Hell in "Sink Atlantis!" part two!

Dan Abnett & Rob Williams (w) Joe Bennett (a)

BATGIRL #26 (AUG. 22)

"Art of the Crime" part one. During a high-speed chase with murderous art thief Grotesque, the villain K.O.'s Batgirl with a souped-up stun gun that temporarily fries the device implanted in her spine. (That thing that helps her, you know, walk and be Batgirl?) Babs finds herself in for a whole new world of hurt now that old wounds have been opened up–and so does Grotesque.

Mairghread Scott (w) Paul Pelletier (a)

BATMAN #52

BATMAN #52 (AUG. 1)

"Cold Days" continues! The jury in the Mr. Freeze trial is hopelessly deadlocked because one man won't vote guilty–and that man is Bruce Wayne. Freeze's defense is that Batman used excessive force, making his arrest illegal, and Bruce is the one man who actually knows for sure what went down between Batman and his ice-cold nemesis. And if Bruce is right, that means everything he's devoted himself to as the Caped Crusader is a lie; he is hurting more than helping. With Dick Grayson putting the Batsuit back on to keep Gotham City safe while Bruce is sequestered, could this be the out Bruce needs to discard the cape and cowl forever?

Tom King (w) Lee Weeks (a)

BATMAN #53 (AUG. 15)

"Cold Days" concludes! The Eisner Award-nominated team of Tom King and Lee Weeks reexamine the relationship between hero and foe, as Batman relives not just that one violent night when he took down the King of Cold, but every time the two have come to blows. The evidence has been weighed, the arguments have been made, and now the jury has come to a decision. Mr. Freeze's fate hangs in the balance, but oddly, so does Bruce Wayne's. There have been a lot of changes in the Dark Knight's life as of late, and when he walks out of the courthouse, he is poised to make a decision

SUICIDE SQUAD #45 (JULY 4)

Will the Lost City be lost once again?

In "Sink Atlantis!" an epic four-issue crossover event co-written by AQUAMAN scribe Dan Abnett and SUICIDE SQUAD vet Rob Williams, Amanda Waller dispatches the Squad to Aquaman's domain with a mission to send Atlantis–now a prosperous surface kingdom–back to the depths of the sea.

Unlike most Squad stories, Waller finds herself not in charge of the team. Instead, she's taking orders from a U.S. Navy hawk, Admiral Meddinghouse.

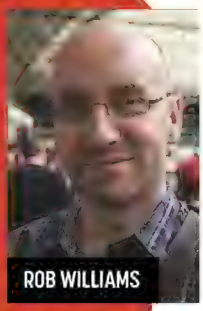
"He is not a friendly guy," says Abnett. "[He's] ultra-aggressive and keen to neutralize a 'clear and present' threat to national security." Adds Williams: "When [Meddinghouse] puts this to the powers that be in Washington and is told that more diplomatic channels are going to be followed, he decides to take things into his own hands."

While diplomats are dispatched, Task Force X stands ready to spill blood to make sure Atlantis doesn't endanger U.S. interests.

"America is sending its diplomats to Mera's coronation as queen of Atlantis, [but the] Suicide Squad will be going in through the back door," says Williams.

Abnett explains: "It's the U.S. versus Atlantis again, but this time it's covert, underhanded and dirty."

Rob Williams & Dan Abnett (w) Jose Luis (a)



ROB WILLIAMS

DAN ABNETT

5TH WEEK WONDERS

Six, over-sized annuals hit the shelves for an end-of-summer blowout

BATGIRL ANNUAL #2 (Aug. 29th)
Sibling rivalry takes on a whole new meaning in this one-shot story that tracks Batgirl's hunt for a serial killer whose M.O. strikes a familiar chord. Namely, a disturbing similarity to her brother, current convict James Gordon Jr. Family bonds are restored during a visit to his maximum- security surroundings, but Babs' doubts linger. Is James Jr. helping to solve this case... or pulling her strings in a diabolical power play? ***Mairghread Scott (w) Elena Casagrande (a)***

DAMAGE ANNUAL #1 (Aug. 29)
Damage's earliest origins are revealed with an issue that delves into what made soldier Ethan Avery volunteer to become the monstrous, living weapon of mass destruction. Also discover what happened to the other recruits to the top- secret program that birthed Damage and tasked him with destroying any enemy trying to create their own monster on a leash. ***Robert Venditti (w) Diogenes Neves (a)***

NIGHTWING ANNUAL #1 (Aug. 29)
The smart city overhaul of Bludhaven was just the beginning- a single battle in a larger cyberwar that Nightwing is only starting to understand. But now the story of the dark web organization begins to expand as Grayson travels to Gotham City and partners up with Vicki Vale. We live in an era of fake news, alternative facts, disinformation. The gatekeepers of truth can't be trusted anymore, and sometimes elections, businesses and even lives are at stake. Nightwing faces off against the first of three lieutenants in the army born of the dark web. Vire, the psychic embodiment of malware who can unearth your darkest secrets. ***Benjamin Percy (w) Otto Schmidt (a)***

RED HOOD AND THE OUTLAWS ANNUAL #2 (Aug. 29)
The boys are back - Red Hood and Arsenal, together again! Sort of. While Jason Todd is recovering after a brutal beatdown from the man who taught him everything he knows about brutal beatdowns, Roy Harper divides his time between being a nursemaid to his bestie and tracking down the source of tainted drugs that have killed thousands. It isn't long before the two find themselves in Beijing battling the Sisters of Suzie Su! All this and... the inexplicable fate of Artemis and Bizarro! ***Scott Lobdell (w) Clayton Henry (a)***

THE SILENCER ANNUAL #1 (Aug. 29)
Silencer visits Gotham City, but she's not there to see the sights - she's there on special assignment from Talia al Ghul and things are about to get messy. It's a rare glimpse into Honor's old life as the premier Leviathan Assassin, and how an all-out bat-brawl with Batman complicates everything. Will Batman slap the cuffs on this metahuman hit woman- or will one of Batman's rogues get the drop on them both?
Dan Abnett (w) Jack Herbert and various (a)

SUICIDE SQUAD ANNUAL #1 (Aug. 29)
Thrown together to apprehend an escaped inmate, Merlyn, Rag Doll, Scorpio, Tao Jones, Scream Queen and Shimmer head into the muck surrounding Belle Reve, but no one is prepared for a meeting with the Swamp Thing. Bodies decay quickly in the bayous of Louisiana, and the avatar of the Green doesn't care if the Squad makes it out alive.
Cullen Bunn (w) Ronan Cliquet (a)

BATMAN BEYOND #23

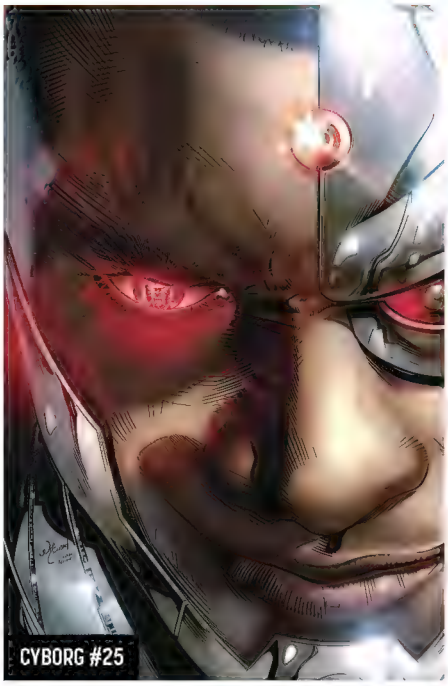
that could change how the rest of the world sees Batman from now on...
Tom King (w) Lee Weeks (a)

BATMAN BEYOND #23 (AUG. 22)
Batman's got a bull's-eye on his back in part four of "Target: Batman." Thanks to the machinations of the Scarecrow, the entire city of Neo-Gotham is looking to take aim at the Dark Knight–including his own partner, Robin! Will hero turn against hero when fear is in the air? Elsewhere, former Royal Flusher Melanie Walker looks to upgrade her image and take on a new heroic mantle, so she seeks advice from newsman Jack Ryder–unaware that he's a total costumed Creeper!
Dan Jurgens (w) Will Conrad (a)

BATWOMAN #18 (AUG. 15)
It's the series finale, and there's a lot of drama to resolve for Kate Kane, both in and out of costume. As Batwoman, she teams with Renee Montoya to thwart Clock King's latest time-bending enterprise: selling a drug that allows criminals to know if their crime will be successful–before it's committed. But Batwoman's facing a quandary to boot: Take this drug off the street, or use it herself to stop crime? The only fight tougher is the personal one: Should Kate and Renee give their relationship another chance?
Marguerite Bennett (w) Fernando Blanco (a)

CATWOMAN #2 (AUG. 1)
Gotham's a toxic litter box for Selina Kyle of late, so she hits the road looking to clear the air, change her look and clear her name, too– there's a copycat burglar swiping her M.O. who needs sorting out. In her hometown,

CATWOMAN #2


CYBORG #25

Catwoman runs afoul of a crime boss who's also hunting this impostor. Can the two declare a truce to hunt a mutual enemy, or will Selina end up just more roadkill?
Joëlle Jones (w/a)

THE CURSE OF BRIMSTONE #5
(AUG. 1)
There's no child's play involved when the Salesman's ledger brings Joe and Annie to another mysterious town that he's destroyed, this time leaving it populated only by kids. So what happened to all the adults? You'd have to ask the town's leader, Slackjaw, but you're not gonna like the answer! Also, Annie might have made a love connection–with a serial killer named Wandering Jack, who's now stalking her.
Justin Jordan (w) Philip Tan (a)

CYBORG #25 (AUG. 1)
Cyborg's looking at a fatal systems crash against high-tech troublemaker N-Jin, whose newfound ability to upload his consciousness into robot bodies around the world makes him nearly uncatchable. Can Vic find an upgrade to negate N-Jin's escapability, or will he have to put in a trouble ticket with the I.T. department?
Marv Wolfman (w) Tom Derenick (a)

DAMAGE #8 (AUG. 15)
Laid up in a hospital recuperating till he can become Damage again, Ethan Avery gets help from a surprising source: the Unknown Soldier, master of covert warfare! The Soldier helps Ethan evade Colonel Jonas and her military ops team until his powers recharge, but time's running out–not just for Ethan, but for the other patients as well.
Robert Venditti (w) Diogenes Neves (a)

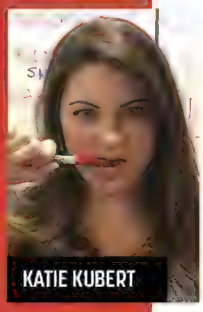
DEATHSTROKE #34 (AUG. 1)
It's part five of "Batman vs. Deathstroke," and "The Stormy Present" finds our two marquee combatants locked in the Batcave, forced to resolve their differences–or die trying! The showdown only turns saltier when the feds seize Bruce Wayne's assets, including Wayne Manor, after Slade drops a dime. And Deathstroke shows Batman he's not the only detective in town, as Slade closes in on the mystery of his relationship with Robin.
Christopher Priest (w) Carlo Pagulayan (a)

DETECTIVE COMICS #986 (AUG. 8)
Black Lightning, the Signal and Cassandra Cain are working very well together...but now they're up against a foe who can tap directly into their worst emotions and play them like music! When you've seen the kinds of horrors these poor souls have, there's plenty of trauma to work with... and with that, you can turn these heroes into deadly weapons! Meanwhile Batman's "side project" has been revealed–what are the Brainiac Files, and what, exactly, does Batman plan to do with them?
Bryan Hill (w) Philippe Briones (a)

DETECTIVE COMICS #987 (AUG. 22)
Then, the pulse-pounding "On the Outside" storyline hurtles toward its cataclysmic conclusion! Batman has tasked Katana, Black Lightning, the Signal and Orphan (a.k.a. Cassandra Cain) with stopping a rogue operator using alien technology that can crack into any mind on Earth – and unfortunately for them, that includes Batman's!
Bryan Hill (w) Miguel Mendonça (a)

THE FLASH #52 (AUG. 8)
On your mark, get set and go for part one

HOT TICKET
DC Comics staffers pick their personal must-reads for August


KATIE KUBERT

NAME: Katie Kubert
AGE: Xennial
WHAT I DO: "As an editor, I'm responsible for creating a comic from soup to nuts."
FAVORITE COMICS: "Big fan of John Byrne/Dick Giordano's MAN OF STEEL, Garth Ennis/Steve Dillon's PREACHER and Grant Morrison/Frank Quitely's WE3. I also fell in love with Paul Dini/Eduardo Risso's DARK NIGHT recently, and have a soft spot for Anthony Bourdain/Joel Rose/Langdon Foss' GET JIRO."
SUPERPOWER: "I've been told recently that I have an exceptional talent for making things harder on myself, but to achieve good ends. So perhaps even though I usually always choose the uphill battle, I don't settle for anything less than awesome."
EXCITED ABOUT IN JULY (AND IT CAN'T BE A BOOK YOU'RE WORKING ON. NO FREE PLUGS!): "ADVENTURES OF THE SUPER SONS by Pete Tomasi and Carlo Barberi–it's the lost adventures of Robin and Superboy! I love how Tomasi writes kids (and he's exceptionally gifted at writing the dynamic between fathers and sons), and the new series explores adventures from that run that didn't make it to the page. Plus, it's got the debut of 'the Gang,' which is essentially kid versions of all the coolest DCU villains–this is a playground brawl too adorable to miss."

ADVENTURES OF THE SUPER SONS #1

SILENCER IS GOLDEN

Artist Patch Zircher dishes on the comic book and cinematic influences for his art when drawing the bone-crunching, bullet-blasting action in THE SILENCER

PATCH ZIRCHER

THE SILENCER, the dynamic story of reluctant (and retired) assassin Honor Guest, welcomes the equally dynamic–and not at all reluctant–artist Patrick Zircher to the killer creative squad for the upcoming SILENCER #8. Zircher, a veteran penciller of characters such as Superman and a veritable "movie nut," reveals that he often looks to the silver screen for inspiration for action sequences:

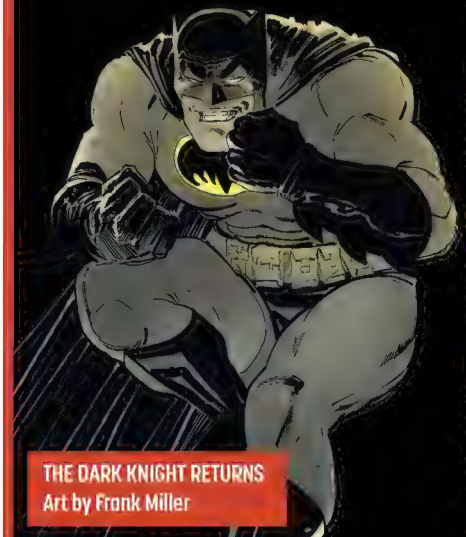
MICHAEL KAHN (film editor) "I notice film editing a lot, because every time you transition from one viewpoint to another, that's what we have to think about in comics. Kahn's work in Saving Private Ryan is like that, too; the storming of the beach is a wonderfully edited sequence."

DEDE ALLEN (film editor) "The end of Bonnie and Clyde is one of the most influential sequences to me as far as how I think when I draw. When they're about to be gunned down and ambushed by the law, the edits come very rapidly. Before the gun battle even begins, there's a rapid cut to birds flying out of the bushes because they're startled by one of the lawmen. You've got these cuts to a variety of subjects that aren't always directly related to the conflict, but are aspects of it."

EDGAR WRIGHT (director) "Wright, who directed Scott Pilgrim vs. the World and Baby Driver, has a very kinetic editing style, which is a big influence on how I break down panels and separate them. I love editing like the introduction scene [in Baby Driver]; I try to get some of that snap."

FRANK MILLER (director/comic book legend) "Frank Miller's DARK KNIGHT changed the way I think about storytelling. Miller separates action into individual beats with lots of close-ups. It looks like film editing: he'll cut to a gun muzzle, or a knife blade. With large, juggernaut characters, you'll do a lot of pinup splashes, but with something like SILENCER you'll establish the characters and then move in tight. Kind of like a Wing Chun kind of battle, where everybody's up close." ■

Don't miss THE SILENCER #8, in stores August 22!



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
Art by Frank Miller

SILENCER by Patch Zircher

THE FLASH #52

GREEN LANTERNS #52

HAWKMAN #3

of "Grips of Strength"! Barry Allen races to the House of Heroes at the center of the Multiverse to meet with the Flashes of 52 worlds for info on the new forces he's recently encountered. Meanwhile, back in Central City, Trickster's turning informant against Warden Wolfe, but that brings about a sneak attack that Barry and the time-lost Commander Cold must team up to stop–if they can quit butting heads long enough to do so.
Joshua Williamson (w) Christian Duce (a)

THE FLASH #53 (AUG. 22)
Then, it's a slippery slope for the Scarlet Speedster when he must team up with the frosty Commander Cold to stop a powered-up Trickster from trashing Central City. The Trickster's first target is the maximum-security prison Iron Heights, which could mean a criminal breakout the city would never survive.
Joshua Williamson (w) Christian Duce (a)

GREEN ARROW #43 (AUG. 1)
Seattle's in for a serious shake-up when Green Arrow crosses quivers with a new vigilante "hero" dubbed the Citizen, who's hell-bent on exposing the corrupt and criminal one-percenters operating in the Emerald City. Green Arrow initially applauds these efforts, until the Citizen turns judge, jury and executioner–can you guess what bloviating billionaire is next on his hit list? Also, a little birdie told us that help for Oliver is on the way–but we're not singing who it is just yet.
Julie Benson and Shawna Benson (w) Javier Fernandez (a)

GREEN LANTERNS #52 (AUG. 1)
The Green Lanterns find themselves outgunned, outmatched and in over their heads when the Corps rings begin to malfunction. As the Guardians of the Universe and Hal Jordan begin to search for answers, the Ravagers of Olys continue their relentless assault in "Evil's Might" part three!
Dan Jurgens (w) Marco Santucci (a)

GREEN LANTERNS #53 (AUG. 15)
Did Simon Baz commit murder? As the clues and evidence stack up, Baz takes off to Earth mysteriously, leaving his partner Jessica Cruz and Hal Jordan to wonder if he's gone rogue. "Evil's Might" continues as what's been affecting the Green Lantern rings begins to reveal itself.
Dan Jurgens (w) Marco Santucci (a)

HAL JORDAN AND THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS #50 (AUG. 8)
This. Is. It! It's an extra-sized anniversary celebration, and one of the biggest battles the Green Lantern Corps has ever fought to mark the occasion. John Stewart issues a dramatic order: no lethal force! The Green Lanterns need to prove they can keep law and order in the universe without killing. Elsewhere, Hal Jordan faces down Tomar-Tu, and looks to use the Darkstars' armor as a weapon against them–with some psychic help from Hector Hammond (who probably shouldn't be trusted).
Robert Venditti (w) Rafa Sandoval (a)

HARLEY QUINN #47 (AUG. 1)
It's the grand finale of "Harley vs. Apokolips"! Harley's trapped on Darkseid's homeworld, having failed to become a Female Fury under Granny Goodness' tutelage. Trapped in a "reeducation chamber" that threatens to destroy her free will, Harley must dig deep to throw off the alien shackles and get back to Earth. She just needs to escape a super-max alien prison, fight off a planet full of super-powered psychos, defeat a New God, then steal a spaceship and fly it home. No problem-o!
Sam Humphries (w) John Timms (a)

HARLEY QUINN #48 (AUG. 15)
Being stuck on an alien planet for months has really messed with Harley's finances–she's gotta become a working stiff again just to pay off all the bills she racked up while on Apokolips! And not only is the city threatening to demolish her Coney Island apartment building if she doesn't pay up, she's helping failed Fury Petite Tina to adjust to life on Earth, which ain't cheap. Sounds like it's time for the ramen diet!
Sam Humphries (w) Allison Borges (a)

HAWKMAN #3 (AUG. 8)
While searching for the next puzzle piece in his mission to save the universe, Hawkman takes flight and winds up fighting rampaging thunder lizards on Dinosaur Island–you know, as one does. Recovering from the battle, Hawkman discovers a race of bird people, who force him to fight to prove he's the one, true Hawkman. That all leads to the next location on his mission, and he's transported across the galaxy to the last place–and person–he expected to find. Where is he, and who's he facing? That would be a spoiler alert!
Robert Venditti (w) Bryan Hitch (a)

THE IMMORTAL MEN #5 (AUG. 8)
Caden Park comes to grips with his immortal lineage, thus launching a bold new era for the Immortal Men! However, this new epoch is threatened right out of the gate, as the

THE FAST FIVE

JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK and LEGION OF DOOM writer James Tynion IV discusses his move to the darker side of the DC Universe

JAMES TYNION IV

AFTER A WELL-RECEIVED RUN ON DETECTIVE COMICS, YOU'RE GOING FROM THE BAT-FAMILY TO A TEAM OF VILLAINS IN LEGION OF DOOM AND A GROUP OF MYSTICAL MISFITS IN JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK.

TYNION IV: I was always a big fan of the villains. I love the very human drama of people who go up against the extremes of the world and then just basically give the finger to everyone. And the fun thing about the magical side of the DC Universe is that it's all these scary-looking, monster-type characters who are actually very sweet on the inside. Then it's the characters in the magical world who look the most beautiful who usually end up being demons. It's nice to operate in a world where the rules are kind of reversed.

THIS IS THE FIRST JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK TEAM TO INCLUDE ONE OF THE TRINITY. WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BRING WONDER WOMAN ONTO THIS TEAM?

I'm taking a character who comes from the brightest, most optimistic part of the world and throwing her into the scariest, darkest part. Not only that, but we're finding out Wonder Woman has her own connections to this dark and terrifying world that she's never really grasped. That's what allows the story to be horror, because you have a character who can really experience the fear of suddenly being enveloped by this world.

IF WONDER WOMAN HAS DARK CONNECTIONS HERSELF, DOES THAT SPELL TROUBLE FOR THE TEAM THEY AREN'T AWARE OF?

Absolutely. This is going to lead into a very big fall storyline that I can't even hint at, but it's something that grows beyond JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK. What's coming is going to have ramifications for every magical character that exists at DC. It's going to be a very scary Halloween.

JUSTICE LEAGUE #5

YOU'LL ALSO BE HITTING SOME CLASSIC DC MYSTICAL LOCATIONS.

I have a scene coming up that I want to do in the Parliament of Trees. I want to go to some of the crazy magical dimensions of the DC Universe. You can see right on the cover of the second issue, the Tower of Fate, which has always been one of my favorite locations in the DC Universe. There are so many crazy places that I'm very excited to bring this cast of characters to.

YOU'RE WRITING THE LEGION OF DOOM IN JUSTICE LEAGUE #5. WHAT DO YOU THINK IT MEANS FOR THE DC UNIVERSE TO HAVE FIVE OF THE MOST POWERFUL VILLAINS START WORKING TOGETHER?

It's really dangerous stuff. What they're trying to do is work together to convince the entire world that they shouldn't be fighting for justice. They should be fighting for an "all for one" mentality. Everyone in this universe should be pushing to achieve what they selfishly want because to not push for that is actually fighting against your base instincts. That's going to mean a lot of trouble for our friends in the Hall of Justice.

JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK #2

Immortal Men must battle an unstoppable army of their fellow immortals in a floating war-city miles above New York City. That's one bite the Big Apple may not survive! Meanwhile, this war of immortals draws all kinds of unwanted attention, starting with black-ops badass Amanda Waller. Gulp!
James Tynion IV (w) Tyler Kirkham (a)

JUSTICE LEAGUE #5 (AUG. 1)

Lex Luthor's back in the present just trying to live his best life after seeing what the future could have held for him. Luthor's new mantra? "Embrace Your Doom!" So now he's rounding up a new Legion of Doom to go on a cosmic wilding and establish himself as the biggest baddie in the DCU. In full recruiting mode, Luthor approaches both Sinestro and Gorilla Grodd to join his new team, and he doesn't exactly have to twist any arms. (They've got a matching 401K plan and great bennies, after all!)
James Tynion IV (w) Doug Mahnke (a)

JUSTICE LEAGUE #6 (AUG. 15)

Did you read the write-up on issue #5? Do you really think anything's gotten better for the Justice League in the past two weeks? Still Force? Still a thing! Ultraviolet Galaxy Lantern? Keeps attacking! Sinestro? Total garbage! Lex Luthor and Joker? Beating everyone to the Source Wall piece. If that happens? You don't wanna know.
Scott Snyder (w) Jorge Jimenez (a)

JUSTICE LEAGUE DARK #2 (AUG. 22)

Plagued by a rash of otherworldly resurrections, the new JLD team begins scouring the shadowy corners of the DCU looking for leads. Turns out, this latest

JUSTICE LEAGUE ODYSSEY #2

MISTER MIRACLE #11

SUPERMAN #2

mystery ties back to the Tree of Wonder, last seen laying down roots in JUSTICE LEAGUE: NO JUSTICE–and it bears poisoned fruit to boot. The Tree serves as a doorway from the Realm of Magic to our world, and the Upside Down Man is just the first of many all-powerful mystic entities looking for a new haunt. It's gonna take a major twist of fate for our heroes to get out of this one...
James Tynion IV (w) Alvaro Martinez (a)

JUSTICE LEAGUE ODYSSEY #2
(AUG. 8)
Cyborg, Starfire, Green Lantern Jessica Cruz and Azrael debate whether so-called "God of Evil" Darkseid should have joined the team. (Too late–that evil horse has left the barn!) But before the team can resolve this conflict, they're forced into action when Vril Dox takes an interest in the Coluan refugees, attacking their ship with a new army of his own creation. 'Cuz more violence is always the answer!
Joshua Williamson (w) Stjepan Sejic (a)

MISTER MIRACLE #11 (AUG. 8)
If there's one thing popular fiction has taught us by now, it's: never make a deal with the devil! And yet Mister Miracle is still listening when Darkseid approaches him with just such a devilish proposition–if Scott sends his newborn son to Apokolips, there will be peace on New Genesis. Since when has Darkseid been famous for his honesty?! It'll be a miracle if this doesn't blow up in Scott's face.
Tom King (w) Mitch Gerads (a)

NEW CHALLENGERS #4 (AUG. 15)
The Challengers tackle undead barbarians and a zombie-dinosaur stampede way down under in otherworldly Skartaris. Good thing they find that flock of pterodactyls, too–turns out to be handy against rogue agents setting up a super-weapon! Unfortunately, the Challengers don't know that their HQ has been destroyed and their predecessors are missing. Plus, their borrowed time might be up, –no Challengers Mountain, no refilled hourglasses! All in a day's work for the Challengers! (Face palm!)
Scott Snyder and Aaron Gillespie (w) V Ken Marion (a)

NIGHTWING #47 (AUG. 1)
Dick Grayson may want to consider a new career in cyber-security, because the major tech upgrades coming to Blüdhaven mean deadly danger for everyone in the city. Nightwing battles the mysterious tech mogul Willem Cloke, who it turns out is just a front man for the real threat–an organization whose roots reach into the dark web! Time to change those passwords, Blüdhaven!
Benjamin Percy (w) Chris Mooneyham and Klaus Janson (a)

SIDEWAYS #7 (AUG. 8)
Reeling from a great personal tragedy, Derek rejects his friends and family on an epic journey into the Dark Multiverse with the Seven Soldiers. With one member lost, the remaining Soldiers need Sideways to guide them into uncharted territory as they confront the deadly challenge of the Sheeda!
Dan Didio (w) Kenneth Rocafort (a)

THE SILENCER #8 (AUG. 22)
So far, Silencer's family vacation gets zero stars on review websites, and things are only looking worse from here on out. Silencer races to stop Talia al Ghul's loyalists from reviving her in a Lazarus Pit, but she's got TWO heavy hitters on her tail: meta-hitman Quietus and mystical psycho Wishbone, who's about to unleash some body-swapping shenanigans on everyone involved with this caper. And are you ready for a trip to Action Land, the Superman theme park? "Hell-iday Road" starts here!
Dan Abnett (w) Patch Zircher (a)

SUPERGIRL #21 (AUG. 8)
Mourning the loss of the Kryptonians wiped out by Rogol Zaar, Supergirl resolves to find answers and sets off into deep space to learn more about the would-be usurper. Using whatever tech she can scrounge, Supergirl builds a star cruiser, and after intel from Green Lantern, she blasts off into the cosmos with Rogol Zaar's deadly axe to solve the mystery–along with a traveling companion you won't believe!
Marc Andreyko (w) Kevin Maguire (a)

SUPERMAN #2 (AUG. 8)
The world quakes and shakes as it begins to succumb to the effects of the entire planet being moved into the lifeless realm known as the Phantom Zone. As Superman works with the World's Greatest Heroes, an old enemy trapped in the same prison returns to stop the Man of Steel and escape.
Brian Michael Bendis (w) Ivan Reis (a)

TEEN TITANS #21 (AUG. 22)
Next up on the Teen Titans' target list is none other than longtime antagonist Gizmo, whose neighborhood toy store secretly serves as a front for his arms-dealing business. (You can get a Nerf blaster and a rail gun? Cool!) But this whole escapade is about to blow up in their faces when they find Gizmo strapped to an

BATMAN VS. (FORMER) ROBIN

Jason Todd crosses the line and faces his former mentor in a battle to decide the one-time Robin's fate

Jason Todd's operations in Gotham City just ran afoul of the city's top protector, the Dark Knight.

In order to stay in Gotham, Batman made Red Hood promise he'd control his actions and uphold what the Bat-Family stands for—no murder, light torment, you know the drill.

But after a brutal recent bout with the Penguin, Jason's broken his promise to his former partner.

Now the full wrath of the Batman is coming down on the Red Hood.

"Every other time Batman and Red Hood have mixed it up in the past, it was about Jason lashing out at Bruce," explains RED HOOD writer Scott Lobdell. "This time, Red Hood is going up against an outraged and betrayed Batman—which changes everything. This fight is brutal."

As teacher and student clash, Gotham's future hangs in the balance along with Jason's place in the Bat-Family. Can Jason evade his mentor's attacks, or will he find himself behind bars for good? Find out in RED HOOD AND THE OUTLAWS #25 by Scott Lobdell and Dexter Soy, on sale 8/8!

RED HOOD AND THE OUTLAWS #25

THE TERRIFICS #7

THE UNEXPECTED #3

nuclear bomb that's about to go off—right in the middle of New York City. And it's rush hour to boot? Nice knowing you, Big Apple!
Adam Glass (w) Bernard Chang (a)

THE TERRIFICS #7 (AUG. 22)

Welcome to Millennium City in part one of "Tom Strong and the Terrifics"! To cure themselves of the Dark Energy bond that's gripped them, the Terrifics use the Dark Multiverse antenna to track down the one man who can help them—Tom Strong. In Millennium City, the Terrifics follow Strong's signal, only to find his lab destroyed and his loyal A.I. aide Pneuman shattered. And the weirdness doesn't end when a mystical tree transports the team across the universe.
Jeff Lemire (w) Dale Eaglesham (a)

TITANS #24 (AUG. 8)

As if the Source Wall incursions causing a metagene pandemic weren't enough, team dysfunction threatens this latest iteration of the Titans before their new mission even gets off the ground! Nightwing and Miss Martian butt heads over the team's M.O. as the fate of the latest metahuman hangs in the balance! They'd better get their act together, because one of the Titans won't be coming home from this Source Wall mission—and it's not a vacation day!
Dan Abnett (w) Brandon Peterson (a)

THE UNEXPECTED #3 (AUG. 1)

Thanagarian demon Onimar Synn stands prepared to wipe out everyone on Earth to get his claws on the vibroactive Nth metal accidentally created by Neon the Unknown and the Unexpected. Is this new version of Nth metal the most powerful weapon in the galaxy? Or is it the fuel to bring about a new evolution and propel mankind into the future? Plus, get ready for a showdown of Jurassic proportions, as Synn locks horns with a rampaging Brontadon in Monster Valley!
Steve Orlando (w) Cary Nord (a)

WONDER WOMAN #52 (AUG. 8)

At the behest of Aztek, Diana and Artemis join her for a trip to Mexico, but there's no sightseeing on the agenda. Instead, they must rescue a long-lost Amazon who's being held captive by rogue deity Tezcatlipoca, who's trying to break into our world. Can our three heroes save the missing Amazon, stop a raging god and not kill one another in the process?
Steve Orlando (w) ACO (a)

WONDER WOMAN #53 (AUG. 22)

Wonder Woman, Artemis and Aztek have travelled to the Amazon, ostensibly to save a long-lost Amazon sister and stop a rogue Meso-American diety. Sounds simple enough...except our heroes got some bad intel. Now they have to navigate a murderous maze crawling with mythical monsters, and help their renegade sister stop Tezcatlipoca—since they were the ones who unwittingly unleashed him!
Steve Orlando (w) ACO (a)

THE LEGION OF DOOM!
JUSTICE LEAGUE WRITER SCOTT SNYDER TAKES YOU INSIDE THE MOST DANGEROUS SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM ON EARTH!
SUPERMAN!
WHO OR WHAT IS THE RED MIST? AND WHY DOES IT WANTS TO MURDER METROPOLIS?!
GREEN LANTERN!
DC'S TOP-SECRET ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 2018!
PLUS!
TOM KING'S BATMAN, THE FORGOTTEN HORRORS OF THE DARK MULTIVERSE & MORE!
DC NATION
#3
YOUR INSIDE GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF DC COMICS
UNLEASHED AUGUST 1!

BATGIRL BEGINS

August's BATGIRL writer Mairghread Scott discusses her more mature take on Barbara Gordon, cosplaying as Cassandra Cain and a furious nerd-themed workout that almost drove her mad

Mairghread Scott loves Batgirl–that's why she knew she needed to really hurt the redheaded hero.

Sure, it sounds like a super-villain plot, but Scott, who begins a X-issue arc on BATGIRL alongside artist Paul Pelletier with issue #26, just wants to stay true to the more hopeful and fun Barbara Gordon stories, while also upping the stakes and pitting Batgirl against a foe that tests her at every turn.

"It's going to have a much darker tone," promises Scott. "I wanted to bridge the youthful, hopeful take that we got from Burnside Batgirl with the more mature style of other versions of Batgirl, like [writer] Gail Simone's run."

While Scott concocts new ways to torture one of her favorite heroes, she also took time to run down what Babs would pack in her utility belt for a comic-con, her link to a teddy bear named Barbara Roardon and the music that keeps her script pages moving.

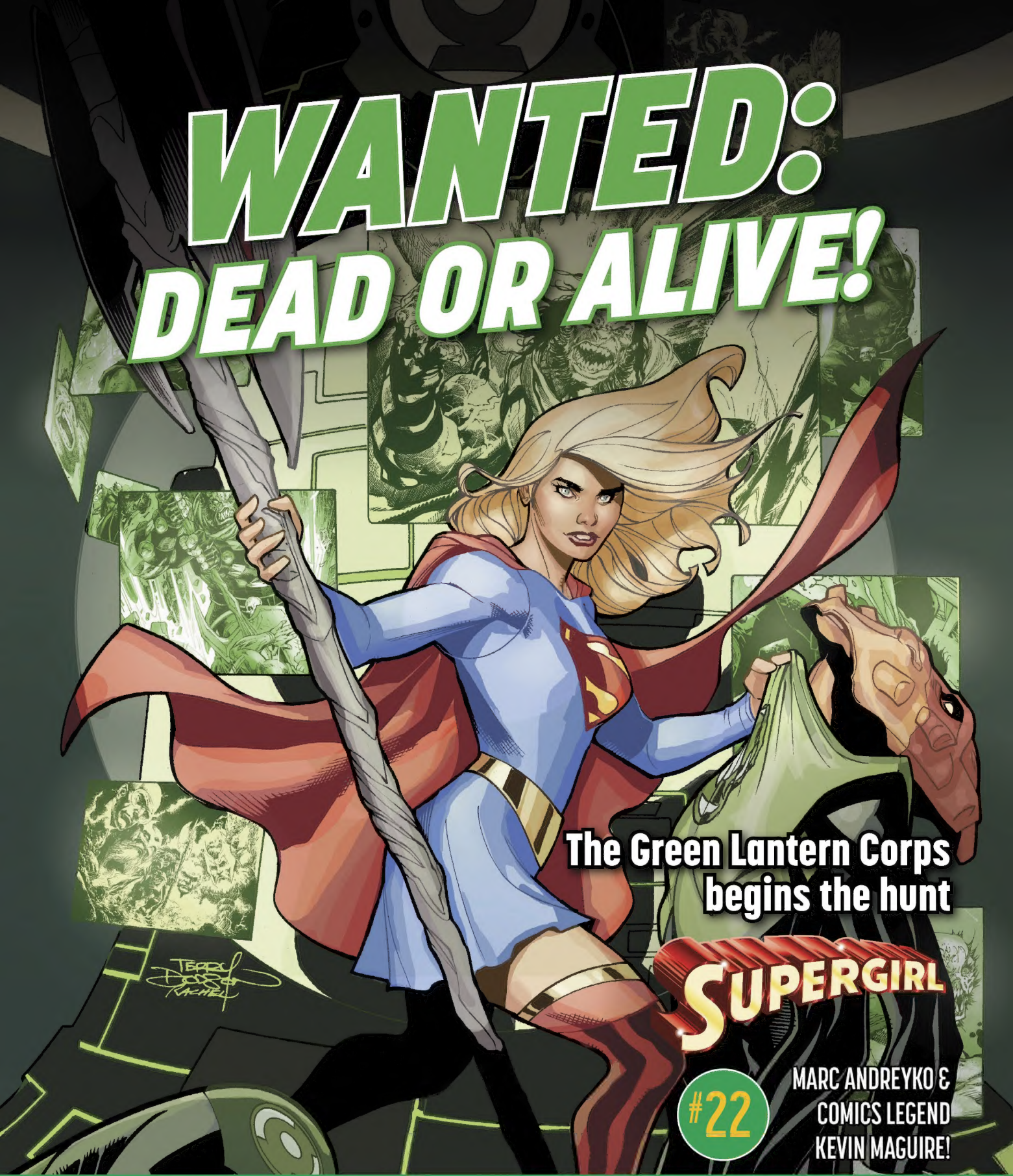
BATGIRL CON PREP "Batgirl would be really glad she's wearing those comfortable shoes–you need the best footwear you can have at Comic-Con! She'd definitely have that app that helps you schedule everything and would definitely be packing in snacks. She's gotta stay hydrated, so if that utility belt is large enough, she'll make sure she has a bottle of water. You just can't count on those drinking-fountain lines."

COSPLAYING AS CAIN "I've cosplayed as the Cassandra Cain Batgirl, because that's who Batgirl was when I was getting into comics."

FAMILY TRADITION "My son has a Batgirl teddy bear that he sleeps with at naptime called Barbara Roardon. [DC chief creative officer and DOOMSDAY CLOCK writer] Geoff Johns sent it over when he was born, it was really sweet. One morning I was talking to my husband about Batgirl, and [our son] looked up and ran to his toy chest and pulled out his little LEGO Batgirl, and ran back to me. Now whenever you say 'Batgirl,' he runs to get his little toy Batgirl. I'm not gonna lie, I was super proud."

BATGIRL & BEATS "There's a lot of heavy electronica, as you might imagine. Batgirl songs have to have a lot of energy and a driving beat. So the TRON soundtrack by Daft Punk...and there's a song called 'Drive It Like You Stole It' that I really like. There's some Chvrches, Switchfoot and Postal Service in there, and a League of Legends track."

FURIOUS FOR (NERD-THEMED) FITNESS "We once did a Mad Max: Fury Road-themed workout in the middle of a heat wave. You had to run around the track with a plate as your wheels, as if you were driving. It was a really small class because it was so hot–it was me and three guys. I somehow got ahead of everyone, and there was a moment when I felt like Furiosa being chased by the War Boys. I usually hate running, but I was like, 'I can't let Furiosa down!'" ■



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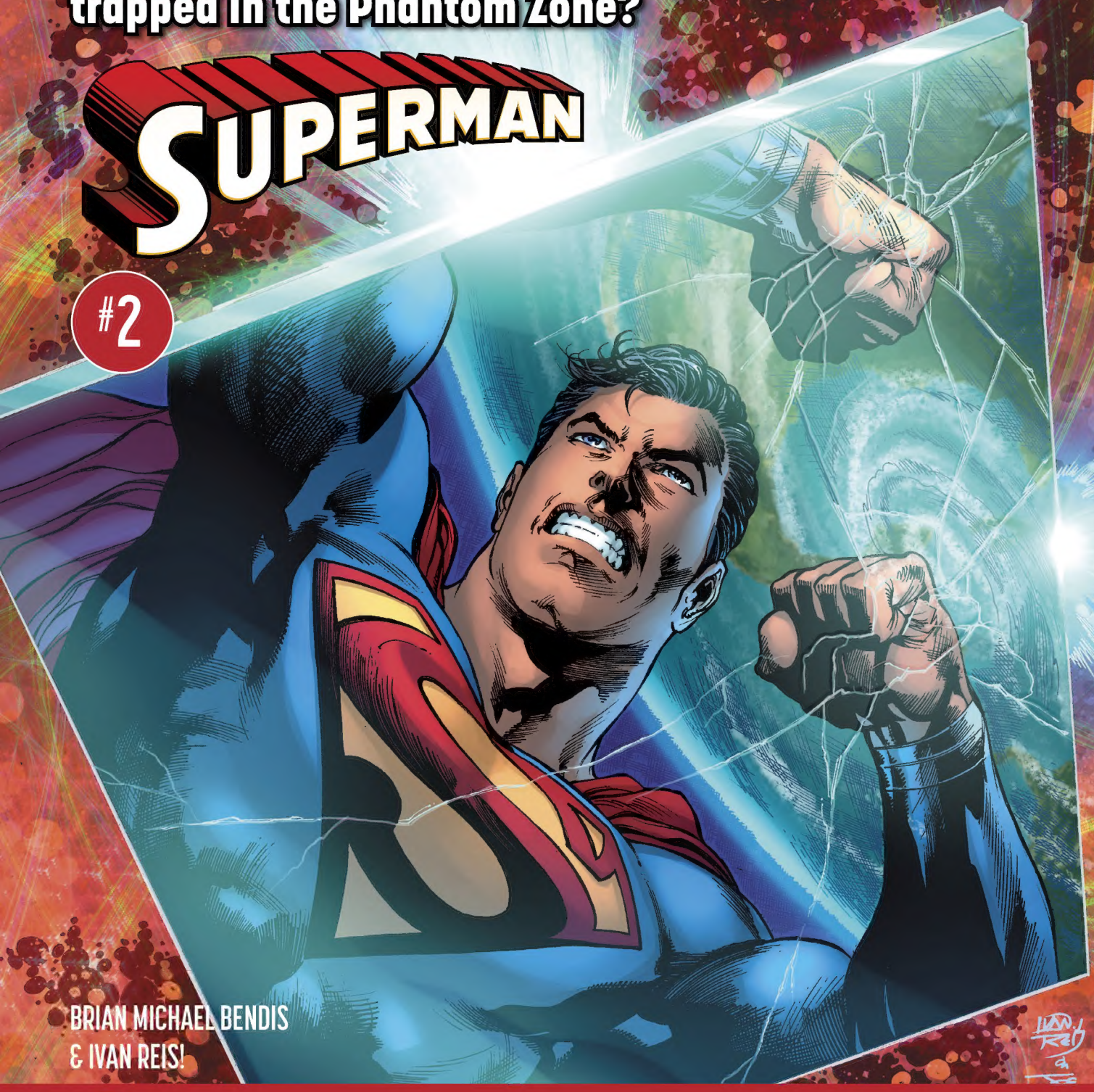
SUPERMAN

#2



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